CARDINAL MERCIER

Pastorals, Letters, and Allocutions

1914-1917

Mercier, Desiré Felicien F. J.
Pastorals, letters,
allocutions.

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CARDINAL MERCIER

Pastorals, Letters, Allocutions

1914–1917

WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
AND FOREWORD

BY

REV. JOSEPH F. STILLEMANS
PRESIDENT OF THE BELGIAN RELIEF FUND

NEW YORK
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FOREWORD

A THREEFOLD purpose has prompted the edition of this book. First of all to give the American people an opportunity of reading and keeping within reach the principal writings and utterances of the heroic Belgian Cardinal from the time of Belgium's invasion up to the present day. True, the American people have an unbounded admiration for Cardinal Mercier. His figure loomed up as that of a giant the day he issued his Pastoral on "Patriotism and Endurance," openly accusing and defying the invader. It is perhaps safe to say that the majority of those who read at all in America have read the first Pastoral of the Cardinal, but few have read his further writings and discourses. These, although they have not made the same impression upon the world at large, are equally energetic and noble and put forth the Cardinal as the "great man" of Belgium, in turn protesting energetically, tenderly encouraging and wisely enlightening. Cardinal Mercier did not deem his duty fulfilled after his first protest against the German invasion and the barbarous methods of the Germans. Since then he has not ceased to speak, condemning repeatedly the various kinds of cruelty and

atrocity a tragically inventive mind continues to produce. Thus he lifts up his voice "For Those in Captivity," protesting against the enslavement of the Belgians by the horrifying system of deportations. When the Germans not only deny any and all atrocities on their part, but, cynically humoristic, turn the tables and accuse the Belgians of the most abominable crimes, he sends forth a protest as forceful as conclusive, and inasmuch as these accusations are directed especially against the Belgian priests, he makes "An Appeal to Truth" in a "Letter to the Bishops of Germany, Bavaria, and Austria-Hungary." Or he strives to keep up the courage of the people by means of his Pastorals—"My Return from Rome," "Courage, my Brethren," and "The Voice of God." Undaunted by fear, he speaks to his people of their great and good King, of the heroism of their absent army, addressing them "For Our Soldiers." Courage, however, is not sufficient, nay, it is often blind. Belgium needs direction and light. Are not the subtile German doctors and the longheaded German professors trying to upset the Belgian mind and conscience? In vain do they labor. There is one watching, one always on duty; and taking as his subject several Christian virtues, but especially "Christian Vengeance," he will speak to the priests of Belgium and through the priests to the entire Belgian nation; pointing out to

them straightforwardly and plainly their duties under the sorrowful circumstances of to-day, and showing them what must be their attitude and their behavior toward the unjust and cruel, though mighty, oppressor.

The second purpose of this edition is to give the reader a more thorough insight into the conditions prevailing in Belgium. The reading of Cardinal Mercier's letters and allocutions creates in one's mind a perfectly clear picture of the situation in Belgium, and vivid images of the different episodes of the awful tragedy of which that unfortunate country is the innocent victim. It renders one familiar with the treatment meted out to the Belgians, as well as with the state of mind of the people in Belgium. Poor country, you will say, appalling are your sufferings, heartrending your sorrows! And still, blessed country! blessed in your glory! blessed in your courage! blessed not least in your noble son and heroic leader, your immortal Cardinal Mercier!

Finally, this book is edited for the purpose of procuring financial assistance for Cardinal Mercier. From every corner of Belgium, from the ruins of castles and from the burned-down huts, appeals reach him every day. Thousands of people whom he knows personally and thousands of others beg him for a little assistance. Should we not try to make it possible for him to answer

these appeals at least in a measure? Whenever permitted by the enemy, he goes out personally from house to house in city and in hamlet. Should we not fill his hand so that he may be our almsgiver on his journeys of charity? P. J. Kenedy & Sons allow a very liberal royalty on this edition. This royalty goes to Cardinal Mercier in its integrity. May I not appeal to you personally, dear reader? Shall your admiration for the great Belgian Cardinal confine itself to *verba et voces?* No; that would not be American! You will send a contribution in accordance with your means to: Miss Marie La Montagne, Treasurer of the Cardinal Mercier Fund, 431 West 47th St., New York, or to: J. P. Morgan & Co., 23 Wall St., New York, Depositary for Cardinal Mercier Fund.

Rev. J. F. Stillemans

President, Belgian Relief Fund, New York

CARDINAL MERCIER

THE PHILOSOPHER — THE BISHOP — THE MAN

I AM not writing a eulogy of Cardinal Mercier. I do not feel equal to such a task. Furthermore, what need is there of pointing out the glorious brilliancy of the sun? My purpose is merely to satisfy the legitimate demands of the reader by giving a short biographical notice and a few facts concerning Cardinal Mercier, the philosopher, the bishop, the man.

The attempted sketch will be quite inexhaustive if for no other reason than the present state of affairs, which makes it impossible to lay one's hands on or to verify a great many facts.

Désiré Cardinal Mercier is sixty-six years of age, being born on November 22, 1851, at Braine-l'Alleud, a village adjoining the historic battlefield of Waterloo. He is a descendant of one of those typically Belgian families: honest, simple, and above all deeply religious, whose pride it is to see their sons ascend the sacred steps of the altar. A maternal uncle of the Cardinal, the Very Rev. Adrian J. Croquet, was for many years one of the great pioneer missionaries in America and his name will forever be held in

veneration in the Oregon missions, where he is commonly referred to as "The Saint of Oregon." Born at Braine-l'Alleud, like the Cardinal himself, in 1818, Adrian J. Croquet was ordained a priest at Malines in 1844. After having been a professor at Basse Wavre and later assistant pastor in his native place, he came to Oregon in 1859, and from 1860 until 1898 remained in charge of the missions of the Grandronde Reservation in that State. The last four years of his life he spent with his relatives in Belgium, and departed from this world on August 8, 1902. Cardinal Mercier has undoubtedly inherited the zeal and sanctity of his uncle, whom he also resembles very much physically.

Having completed the regular course of studies at St. Rombaut's College of Malines and at the diocesan seminary of the same place, Désiré Mercier was raised to the priesthood on April 4, 1874. He then studied theology at the old University of Louvain — that famous center of learning now so sorely afflicted — until he was appointed to the Chair of Philosophy of the seminary of Malines in 1877. In 1882 he was called to Louvain to become Professor of Philosophy. In 1886 Pope Leo XIII appointed him a domestic prelate, which appointment gave Father Mercier the right to the title of Monsignor. Long before he became a Cardinal, Professor Mercier occupied no mean position in the world of philosophy and

science. Nearly thirty years ago, when the Catholic University of America was established at Washington, Monsignor Keane went so far as to entreat Leo XIII to prevail upon Professor Mercier to give the benefit of his talent and zeal to the American Catholic University. Leo XIII, however, did not want to deprive Louvain of its great son, and when this learned Pope desired to renew the interest of the world in Thomistic or Scholastic, or, more correctly, "Neo-Scholastic" philosophy, a special chair was erected at the University of Louvain by the Bishops of Belgium, and Professor Mercier was made its incumbent. In a few years he built up the worldwide known "Higher Institute of Philosophy."

Neo-Scholasticism is the development, not merely the resuscitation, of the Scholasticism of the Middle Ages of which St. Thomas Aquinas was the great exponent. It is a philosophy essentially based on science, modern science, followed up in every avenue of investigation; and whilst its principles are those of Aristotle and Thomas, its chief concern, however, is with the present day's systems. The synthetic explanation of phenomena, which it provides, presupposes a complete knowledge of the details furnished by each science. Newman very thoroughly explains this in his "Idea of a University": "The comprehension of the bearings of one science on another, the use of each to each, and the location

of them all, with one another,—this belongs, I conceive, to a sort of Science of Sciences, which is my conception of what is meant by philosophy."

Monsignor Mercier was not only a torch-bearer in modern philosophy,—he was essentially a teacher, a professor. Those who studied under him can never forget him. How clear his doctrines were, how complete his teachings, how convincing his arguments! Professor Mercier was not satisfied by merely giving lectures to the body of students as a whole; he had his eye on every individual and would make it a point to influence each one personally. He soon discovered the talented worker among his students, and such a one he would encourage and guide on to private, deeper study. The result of this has been that Belgium's great school of philosophy to-day might well be called the "Disciples of Mercier."

Mercier's "Psychology" and "Logic," as well as his "Criteriology," are to be found in every philosopher's library and translated in all the leading languages. A few months ago there appeared the first volume of Mercier's "A Manual of Modern Scholastic Philosophy," edited by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., London, and B. Herder, St. Louis.

In the month of January, 1906, his Eminence Cardinal Goossens, Archbishop of Malines, went to his reward. Monsignor Mercier pronounced the

panegyric. Upon returning from the Cathedral after the funeral, his colleague, Professor Joseph Sencie, told Monsignor Mercier that he would be Cardinal Goossens' successor. This prophecy provoked a hearty laugh on the part of Monsignor Mercier. Nevertheless, it was soon to be fulfilled when, on February 21, Monsignor Mercier was appointed as Cardinal Goossens' successor. Professor Mercier's reputation as a philosopher was so great, and the work he had accomplished so splendid and far-reaching, that in some quarters the opinion was expressed that such a man should not be taken away from his study and life work and intrusted with the active care of a diocese. Professor Mercier himself held that opinion, as he sincerely stated in his farewell speech to the University of Louvain. However, there was but little need to fear. It soon became evident that Cardinal Mercier's master-mind could easily conquer a new field of activity. He at once showed himself conversant with every detail of the complicated administration of his great diocese, and soon succeeded in winning the admiration and love of priest and layman alike. Knowing full well that the Catholic people are what the priests make them — or, more correctly, what the priests are themselves — Cardinal Mercier considers it his most sacred duty to labor for the highest possible uplifting of his clergy, and takes special delight in

preaching theological conferences and retreats for his priests and seminarians. Two volumes have been published and translated into English: "A mes Séminaristes" and "Retraite Pastorale." In these conferences, as well as in all the writings of the Cardinal, one may equally admire the elegance and simplicity of style and the thoroughness and loftiness of thought.

The Cardinal is at the head of an immense diocese in which there are not fewer than 2,500,000 Catholics, divided into close to 800 parishes. It is not difficult to imagine how laborious the administration of such a diocese must be and how many problems are to be solved every day. As an administrator, Cardinal Mercier is progressive and modern — always ready to accept healthy reforms and energetic in obtaining results. Though *fortiter in re* he never fails to be *suaviter in modo*.

The Pastoral Letter of Cardinal Mercier on "Patriotism and Endurance" has gone down in history as the greatest document of the present European war.

Those familiar with the ecclesiastical history of Belgium were not surprised at hearing the voice of Belgium's Cardinal on this occasion. The Bishops of Belgium throughout the centuries have been liberty's first champions and patriotism's greatest heralds. Cardinal Frankenberg resisted in turn Austria, France, and Prussia, and died in exile. The famous Bishop of Ghent, Prince

de Broglie, energetically opposed Napoleon the Great, and later on, William, the King of Holland, and he also died in exile. Both these prelates withstood the foreign oppressor to his face, and neither imprisonment nor exile could deter them from their duty. Frankenberg issued his "Declaration" and de Broglie his "Pastoral." These two documents may well be put in a class with Cardinal Mercier's famous letter.

It has long been the custom of the Belgian Bishops to write yearly pastorals on the leading questions and great problems of the day. No library contains greater learning, deeper thought, or more wisdom than the collection of these documents. It was eminently proper, therefore, that in this, the greatest hour of sorrow for Belgium, the voice of Cardinal Mercier should be heard. Catholic Belgium, nay everybody in Belgium, looked to him for light and encouragement.

Cardinal Mercier is a wonderful man — familiar with the greatest problems, yet concerned with the smallest details; honored as few men have been, yet simple as a child; working from early morning until far into the night, yet always having time to listen to everyone. He is known to the whole of Belgium as a living saint — kindness and readiness personified. Whatever he does he does well, because into whatever he does he puts every fiber of his great heart. At the altar he

is a saint; in private conversation, a father; in the pulpit, a warm, convincing orator; in all difficult situations, a wise counselor and a safe guide. A man of action is Cardinal Mercier, placing his confidence in Divine Providence above all things, true enough, but realizing the need of coöperation and work on the part of man.

Cardinal Mercier never knew how to spare himself. As early as 8 o'clock people of all classes in society begin to gather in the Cardinal's anteroom. There the aristocrat and the laborer, the noble dame and the poor girl, meet on equal terms. All are admitted to his presence, and the whole day is taken up in listening to those visitors, who are received exactly in the order of their arrival. Some will come to confer with the Cardinal on most important questions, others bring the most trivial suggestions, others again will come for personal advice and consolation, but all are received with the same fatherly kindness and leave his presence wiser and stronger and happier.

On days not occupied by this tedious reception of all classes of people, the Cardinal visits every part of his immense diocese. A few years ago the Cardinal was driving in his automobile from Malines to Antwerp. A little child was crossing the road in front of the automobile. The Cardinal, upon noticing the danger to the child, lost no time in shouting to his chauffeur to turn

the machine on to the wall alongside the road, with the result that he was violently thrown out of the automobile and severely injured. His face to-day bears the marks of this accident, and he has often been heard to say how much better it was for him to have met with this accident than to have had the slightest injury befall the little child.

Cardinal Mercier is tall, very tall, and very slender. He has the aspect of an ascetic, and not only has he the aspect thereof, but he leads the life of an ascetic — simple, even severe. The eyes are the image of the soul. The Cardinal has wonderful eyes, which bespeak the greatest kindness and yet pierce you through and through. In his conversation he is so essentially human, so very much interested in you, so anxious to help you and please you.

Cardinal Mercier has inscribed on his coat-of-arms the words "Apostolus Jesu Christi." He meant undoubtedly that it is his desire to labor as the apostles have labored. History will proclaim that he has been an apostle in every sense of the word, and will compare him with St. Paul, with whom he may say, "I have fought a good fight. . . . I have kept the faith. . . . There is laid up for me a crown of justice. . . ." This crown of justice, which is one also of glory, the world has even now placed upon the noble brow of Cardinal Mercier.

I

PATRIOTISM AND ENDURANCE

I

PATRIOTISM AND ENDURANCE

CHRISTMAS, 1914

MY VERY DEAR BRETHREN

I CANNOT tell you how instant and how present the thought of you has been to me throughout the months of suffering and of mourning through which we have passed. I had to leave you abruptly on the 20th of August in order to fulfil my last duty towards the beloved and venerated Pope whom we have lost, and in order to discharge an obligation of the conscience from which I could not dispense myself, in the election of the successor of Pius the Tenth, the Pontiff who now directs the Church under the title, full of promise and of hope, of Benedict the Fifteenth.

It was in Rome itself that I received the tidings — stroke after stroke — of the partial destruction of the Cathedral church of Louvain, next of the burning of the Library and of the scientific installations of our great University and of the devastation of the city, and next of the wholesale shooting of citizens, and tortures inflicted upon

women and children, and upon unarmed and undefended men. And while I was still under the shock of these calamities the telegraph brought us news of the bombardment of our beautiful metropolitan church, of the church of Notre Dame au delà la Dyle, of the episcopal palace, and of a great part of our dear city of Malines.

Afar from my diocese, without means of communication with you, I was compelled to lock my grief within my own afflicted heart, and to carry it, with the thought of you, which never left me, to the foot of the Crucifix.

I craved courage and light, and sought them in such thoughts as these: A disaster has visited the world, and our beloved little Belgium, a nation so faithful in the great mass of her population to God, so upright in her patriotism, so noble in her King and Government, is the first sufferer. She bleeds; her sons are stricken down within her fortresses and upon her fields, in defense of her rights and of her territory. Soon there will not be one Belgian family not in mourning. Why all this sorrow, my God? Lord, Lord, hast Thou forsaken us? Then I looked upon the Crucifix. I looked upon Jesus, most gentle and humble Lamb of God, crushed, clothed in His blood as in a garment, and I thought I heard from His own mouth the words which the Psalmist uttered in His name: "O God, my God, look upon me; why hast Thou forsaken me? O my God, I

shall cry, and Thou wilt not hear." And forthwith the murmur died upon my lips; and I remembered what Our Divine Savior said in His Gospel: "The disciple is not above the master, nor the servant above his lord." The Christian is the servant of a God who became man in order to suffer and to die. To rebel against pain, to revolt against Providence, because it permits grief and bereavement, is to forget whence we came, the school in which we have been taught, the example that each of us carries graven in the name of a Christian, which each of us honors at his hearth, contemplates at the altar of his prayers, and of which he desires that his tomb, the place of his last sleep, shall bear the sign.

My dearest Brethren, I shall return by and by to the providential law of suffering, but you will agree that since it has pleased a God made man, who was holy, innocent, without stain, to suffer and to die for us who are sinners, who are guilty, who are perhaps criminals, it ill becomes us to complain whatever we may be called upon to endure. The truth is that no disaster on earth, striking creatures only, is comparable with that which our sins provoked, and whereof God Himself chose to be the blameless victim.

Having recalled to mind this fundamental truth, I find it easier to summon you to face what has befallen us, and to speak to you simply and directly of what is your duty, and of what

may be your hope. That duty I shall express in two words: Patriotism and Endurance.

PATRIOTISM

My dearest Brethren, I desire to utter, in your name and my own, the gratitude of those whose age, vocation, and social conditions cause them to benefit by the heroism of others, without bearing in it any active part.

When, immediately on my return from Rome, I went to Havre to greet our Belgian, French, and English wounded; when, later, at Malines, at Louvain, at Antwerp, it was given to me to take the hands of those brave men who carried a bullet in their flesh, a wound on their forehead, because they had marched to the attack of the enemy, or borne the shock of his onslaught, it was a word of gratitude to them that rose to my lips. "O valiant friends," I said, "it was for us, it was for each one of us, it was for me, that you risked your lives and are now in pain. I am moved to tell you of my respect, of my thankfulness, to assure you that the whole nation knows how much she is in debt to you."

For in truth our soldiers are our saviors.

A first time, at Liège, they saved France; a second time, in Flanders, they arrested the advance of the enemy upon Calais. France and England know it; and Belgium stands before

them both, and before the entire world, as a nation of heroes. Never before in my whole life did I feel so proud to be a Belgian as when, on the platforms of French stations, and halting a while in Paris, and visiting London, I was witness of the enthusiastic admiration our allies feel for the heroism of our army. Our King is, in the esteem of all, at the very summit of the moral scale; he is doubtless the only man who does not recognize that fact, as, simple as the simplest of his soldiers, he stands in the trenches and puts new courage, by the serenity of his face, into the hearts of those of whom he requires that they shall not doubt of their country. The foremost duty of every Belgian citizen at this hour is gratitude to the army.

If any man had rescued you from shipwreck or from a fire, you would assuredly hold yourselves bound to him by a debt of everlasting thankfulness. But it is not one man, it is two hundred and fifty thousand men who fought, who suffered, who fell for you so that you might be free, so that Belgium might keep her independence, her dynasty, her patriotic unity; so that, after the vicissitudes of battle, she might rise nobler, purer, more erect, and more glorious than before.

Pray daily, my Brethren, for these two hundred and fifty thousand, and for their leaders to victory; pray for our brothers in arms; pray

for the fallen; pray for those who are still engaged; pray for the recruits who are making ready for the fight to come.

In your name I send them the greeting of our fraternal sympathy and our assurance that not only do we pray for the success of their arms and for the eternal welfare of their souls, but that we also accept for their sake all the distress, whether physical or moral, that falls to our own share in the oppression that hourly besets us, and all that the future may have in store for us, in humiliation for a time, in anxiety, and in sorrow. In the day of final victory we shall all be in honor; it is just that to-day we should all be in grief.

To judge by certain rumors that have reached me, I gather that from districts that have had least to suffer some bitter words have arisen towards our God, words which, if spoken with cold calculation, would be not far from blasphemous.

Oh, all too easily do I understand how natural instinct rebels against the evils that have fallen upon Catholic Belgium; the spontaneous thought of mankind is ever that virtue should have its instantaneous crown, and injustice its immediate retribution. But the ways of God are not our ways, the Scripture tells us. Providence gives free course, for a time measured by Divine wisdom, to human passions and the conflict

of desires. God, being eternal, is patient. The last word is the word of mercy, and it belongs to those who believe in love. "Why art thou sad, O my soul? and why dost thou disquiet me? *Quare tristis es anima mea, et quare conturbas me?*" Hope in God. Bless Him always; is He not thy Saviour and thy God? *Spera in Deo quoniam adhuc confitebor illi, salutare vultus mei et Deus meus.*

When holy Job, whom God presented as an example of constancy to the generations to come, had been stricken, blow upon blow, by Satan, with the loss of his children, of his goods, of his health, his enemies approached him with provocations to discouragement; his wife urged upon him a blasphemy and a curse. "Dost thou still continue in thy simplicity? Curse God, and die." But the man of God was unshaken in his confidence. "And he said to her: Thou hast spoken like one of the foolish women: if we have received good things at the hand of God, why should we not receive evil? *Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit; sicut Domino placuit ita factum est. Sit nomen Domini benedictum.*" And experience proved that saintly one to be right. It pleased the Lord to recompense, even here below, His faithful servant. "The Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. And for his sake God pardoned his friends."

Better than any other man, perhaps, do I

know what our unhappy country has undergone. Nor will any Belgian, I trust, doubt of what I suffer in my soul, as a citizen and as a Bishop, in sympathy with all this sorrow. These last four months have seemed to me age-long. By thousands have our brave ones been mown down; wives, mothers, are weeping for those they shall not see again; hearths are desolate; dire poverty spreads; anguish increases. At Malines, at Antwerp, the people of two great cities have been given over, the one for six hours, the other for thirty-four hours of a continuous bombardment, to the throes of death. I have traversed the greater part of the districts most terribly devastated in my diocese;[1] and the ruins I beheld, and the ashes, were more dreadful than I, prepared by the saddest of forebodings, could have imagined. Other parts of my diocese, which I have not yet had time to visit,[2] have in like manner been laid waste. Churches, schools, asylums, hospitals, convents

[1] Duffel, Lierre, Berlaer Saint Rombaut, Konings-Hoyckt, Mortsel, Waelhem, Muysen, Wavre Sainte Caterine, Wavre Notre-Dame, Sempst, Weerde, Eppeghen, Hofstade, Elewyt, Rymenam, Boort-Meerbeek, Wespelaer, Haecht, Werchter-Wackerzeel, Rotselaer, Tremeloo; Louvain and its suburban environs, Blauwput, Kessel-Loo, Boven-Loo, Linden, Herent, Thildonck, Bueken, Relst, Aerschot, Wesemael, Hersselt, Diest, Schaffen, Molenstede, Rillaer Gelrode.

[2] Haekendover, Roosbeek, Bautersem, Budingen, Neerlinder, Ottignies, Mousty, Wavre, Beyghem, Capelle-au-Bois, Humbeek, Nieuwenrode, Liezele, Londerzeel, Heyndonck, Mariekerke, Weert, Blaesvelt.

in great numbers, are in ruins. Entire villages have all but disappeared. At Werchter-Wackerzeel, for instance, out of three hundred and eighty homes, a hundred and thirty remain; at Tremeloo two-thirds of the village are overthrown; at Bueken out of a hundred houses twenty are standing; at Schaffen one hundred and eighty-nine houses out of two hundred are destroyed — eleven still stand. At Louvain the third part of the buildings are down; one thousand and seventy-four dwellings have disappeared; on the town land and in the suburbs, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-three houses have been burnt.

In this dear city of Louvain, perpetually in my thoughts, the magnificent church of St. Peter will never recover its former splendor. The ancient college of St. Ives, the art schools, the consular and commercial schools of the University, the old markets, our rich library with its collections, its unique and unpublished manuscripts, its archives, its gallery of great portraits of illustrious rectors, chancellors, professors, dating from the time of its foundation, which preserved for masters and students alike a noble tradition and were an incitement in their studies — all this accumulation of intellectual, of historic, and of artistic riches, the fruit of the labors of five centuries — all is in the dust.

Many a parish lost its pastor. There is now

sounding in my ears the sorrowful voice of an old man of whom I asked whether he had had Mass on Sunday in his battered church. "It is two months," he said, "since we had a church." The parish priest and the curate had been interned in a concentration camp.

Thousands of Belgian citizens have in like manner been deported to the prisons of Germany, to Münsterlagen, to Celle, to Magdeburg. At Münsterlagen alone three thousand one hundred civil prisoners were numbered. History will tell of the physical and moral torments of their long martyrdom. Hundreds of innocent men were shot. I possess no complete necrology; but I know that there were ninety-one shot at Aerschot, and that there, under pain of death, their fellow citizens were compelled to dig their graves. In the Louvain group of communes one hundred and seventy-six persons, men and women, old men and sucklings, rich and poor, in health and sickness, were shot or burnt.

In my diocese alone I know that thirteen priests or religious were put to death.[1] One of

[1] Their brothers in religion or in the priesthood will wish to know their names. Here they are: Dupierreux, of the Society of Jesus; Brothers Sebastian and Allard of the Congregation of the Josephites; Brother Candide of the Congregation of the Brothers of Mercy; Father Maximin, Capuchin, and Father Vincent, Conventual; Lombaerts, parish priest at Boven-Loo; Goris, parish priest at Autgaerden; Carette, professor at the Episcopal college of Louvain; De Clerck, parish priest at Bueken; Dergent, parish priest at Gastode; Wouters Jean, parish priest at Pont-Brûlé. We

these, the parish priest of Gelrode, suffered, I believe, a veritable martyrdom. I made a pilgrimage to his grave, and, amid the little flock which so lately he had been feeding with the zeal of an apostle, there did I pray to him that from the height of Heaven he would guard his parish, his diocese, his country.

We can neither number our dead nor compute the measure of our ruins. And what would it be if we turned our sad steps towards Liège, Namur, Audenne, Dinant, Tamines, Charleroi, and elsewhere? [1]

And there where lives were not taken, and there where the stones of buildings were not thrown down, what anguish unrevealed! Fami-

have reason to believe that the parish priest of Hérent, Van Bladel, an old man of seventy-one, was also killed; until now, however, his body has not been found.

[1] I have said that thirteen ecclesiastics had been shot within the diocese of Malines. There were, to my own actual personal knowledge, more than thirty in the dioceses of Namur, Tournai, and Liège: Schlögel, parish priest of Hastière; Gille, parish priest of Couvin; Pieret, curate at Etalle; Alexandre, curate at Mussy-la-Ville; Maréchal, seminarist at Maissin; the Reverend Father Gillet, Benedictine of Maredsous; the Reverend Father Nicolas, Premonstratensian of the Abbey of Leffe; two Brothers of the same Abbey; one Brother of the Congregation of Oblates; Poskin, parish priest of Surice; Hotlet, parish priest of Les Alloux; Georges, parish priest of Tintigny; Glouden, parish priest of Latour; Zenden, retired parish priest at Latour; Jacques, a priest; Druet, parish priest of Acoz; Pollart, parish priest of Roselies; Labeye, parish priest of Blegny-Trembleur; Thielen, parish priest of Haccourt; Janssen, parish priest of Heure le Romain; Chabot, parish priest of Forêt; Dossogne, parish priest of Hockay; Reusonnet, curate of Olme; Bilande, chaplain of the institute of deaf-mutes at Bouge; Docq, a priest, and others.

lies, hitherto living at ease, now in bitter want; all commerce at an end, all careers ruined; industry at a standstill; thousands upon thousands of working-men without employment; working-women, shop-girls, humble servant-girls without the means of earning their bread; and poor souls forlorn on the bed of sickness and fever, crying, "O Lord, how long, how long?"

There is nothing to reply. The reply remains the secret of God.

Yes, dearest Brethren, it is the secret of God. He is the master of events and the sovereign director of the human multitude. *Domini est terra et plenitudo ejus; orbis terrarum et universi qui habitant in eo.* The first relation between the creature and his Creator is that of absolute dependence. The very being of the creature is dependent; dependent are his nature, his faculties, his acts, his works. At every passing moment that dependence is renewed, is incessantly reasserted, inasmuch as, without the will of the Almighty, existence of the first single instant would vanish before the next. Adoration, which is the recognition of the sovereignty of God, is not, therefore, a fugitive act; it is the permanent state of a being conscious of his own origin. On every page of the Scriptures Jehovah affirms His sovereign dominion. The whole economy of the Old Law, the whole history of the Chosen People, tend to the same end — to

maintain Jehovah upon His throne and to cast idols down. "I am the first and the last. I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is no God beside Me. I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create evil. Woe to him that gainsayeth his maker, a sherd of the earthen pots. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What art thou making, and thy work is without hands? Tell ye, and come, and consult together. A just God and a Savior, there is none beside Me."

Ah, did the proud reason of mankind dream that it could dismiss our God? Did it smile in irony when, through Christ and through His Church, He pronounced the solemn words of expiation and of repentance? Vain of fugitive successes, O light-minded man, full of pleasure and of wealth, hast thou imagined that thou couldst suffice even to thyself? Then was God set aside in oblivion, then was He misunderstood, then was He blasphemed, with acclamation, and by those whose authority, whose influence, whose power had charged them with the duty of causing His great laws and His great order to be revered and obeyed. Anarchy then spread among the lower ranks of mankind, and many sincere consciences were troubled by the evil example. How long, O Lord, they wondered, how long wilt Thou suffer the pride of this iniquity? Or wilt Thou finally justify the impious

opinion that Thou carest no more for the work of Thy hands? A shock from a thunderbolt, and behold all human foresight is set at naught. Europe trembles upon the brink of destruction.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Many are the thoughts that throng the breast of man to-day, and the chief of them all is this: God reveals Himself as the Master. The nations that made the attack, and the nations that are warring in self-defense, alike confess themselves to be in the hand of Him without whom nothing is made, nothing is done. Men long unaccustomed to prayer are turning again to God. Within the army, within the civil world, in public, and within the individual conscience, there is prayer. Nor is that prayer to-day a word learnt by rote, uttered lightly by the lip; it surges from the troubled heart, it takes the form, at the feet of God, of the very sacrifice of life. The being of man is a whole offering to God. This is worship, this is the fulfilment of the primal moral and religious law: the Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve. And even those who murmur, and whose courage is not sufficient for submission to the hand that smites us and saves us, even these implicitly acknowledge God to be the Master, for if they blaspheme Him, they blaspheme Him for His delay in closing with their desires.

But as for us, my Brethren, we will adore Him in the integrity of our souls. Not yet do we see, in all its magnificence, the revelation of His wisdom, but our faith trusts Him with it all. Before His justice we are humble, and in His mercy hopeful. With holy Tobias we know that because we have sinned He has chastised us, but because He is merciful He will save us.

It would perhaps be cruel to dwell upon our guilt now, when we are paying so well and so nobly what we owe. But shall we not confess that we have indeed something to expiate? He who has received much, from him shall much be required. Now, dare we say that the moral and religious standard of our people has risen as its economic prosperity has risen? The observance of Sunday rest, the Sunday Mass, the reverence for marriage, the restraints of modesty — what had you made of these? What, even within Christian families, had become of the simplicity practiced by our fathers, what of the spirit of penance, what of respect for authority? And we too, we priests, we religious, I, the Bishop, we whose great mission it is to present in our lives, yet more than in our speech, the Gospel of Christ, have we earned the right to speak to our people the word spoken by the Apostle to the nations, "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ"? We labor indeed we

pray indeed, but it is all too little. We should be, by the very duty of our state, the public expiators for the sins of the world. But which was the thing dominant in our lives — expiation, or our comfort and well-being as citizens? Alas, we have all had times in which we too fell under God's reproach to His people after the escape from Egypt: "The beloved grew fat and kicked, they have provoked Me with that which was no god, and I will provoke them with that which is no people." Nevertheless He will save us; for He wills not that our adversaries should boast that they, and not the Eternal, did these things. "See ye that I alone am, and there is no other God beside Me. I will kill and I will make to live, I will strike and I will heal."

God will save Belgium, my Brethren, you cannot doubt it.

Nay rather, He is saving her.

Across the smoke of conflagration, across the steam of blood, have you not glimpses, do you not perceive signs, of His love for us? Is there a patriot among us who does not know that Belgium has grown great? Nay, which of us would have the heart to cancel this last page of our national history? Which of us does not exult in the brightness of the glory of this shattered nation? When in her throes she brings forth heroes, our Mother Country gives her own

energy to the blood of those sons of hers. Let us acknowledge that we needed a lesson in patriotism. There were Belgians, and many such, who wasted their time and their talents in futile quarrels of class with class, of race with race, of passion with personal passion.

Yet when, on the second of August, a mighty foreign power, confident in its own strength and defiant of the faith of treaties, dared to threaten us in our independence, then did all Belgians, without difference of party, or of condition, or of origin, rise up as one man, close-ranged about their own king, and their own government, and cry to the invader: "Thou shalt not go through!"

At once, instantly, we were conscious of our own patriotism. For down within us all is something deeper than personal interests, than personal kinships, than party feeling, and, this is the need and the will to devote ourselves to that more general interest which Rome termed the public thing, *Res publica*. And this profound will within us is patriotism.

Our country is not a mere concourse of persons or of families inhabiting the same soil, having amongst themselves relations, more or less intimate, of business, of neighborhood, of a community of memories, happy or unhappy. Not so; it is an association of living souls, subject to a social organization to be defended and safe-

guarded at all costs, even the cost of blood, under the leadership of those presiding over its fortunes. And it is because of this general spirit that the people of a country live a common life in the present, through the past, through the aspirations, the hopes, the confidence in a life to come, which they share together. Patriotism, an internal principle of order and of unity, an organic bond of the members of a nation, was placed by the finest thinkers of Greece and Rome at the head of the natural virtues. Aristotle, the prince of the philosophers of antiquity, held disinterested service of the City — that is, the State — to be the very ideal of human duty. And the religion of Christ makes of patriotism a positive law; there is no perfect Christian who is not also a perfect patriot. For our religion exalts the antique ideal, showing it to be realizable only in the Absolute. Whence, in truth, comes this universal, this irresistible impulse which carries at once the will of the whole nation in one single effort of cohesion and of resistance in face of the hostile menace against her unity and her freedom? Whence comes it that in an hour all interests were merged in the interest of all, and that all lives were together offered in willing immolation? Not that the State is worth more, essentially, than the individual or the family, seeing that the good of the family and of the individual is the cause

and reason of the organization of the State. Not that our country is a Moloch on whose altar lives may lawfully be sacrificed. The rigidity of ancient morals and the despotism of the Cæsars suggested that false principle — and modern militarism tends to revive it — that the State is omnipotent, and that the discretionary power of the State is the rule of Right. Not so, replies Christian theology, Right is Peace, that is, the interior order of a nation, founded upon Justice. And Justice itself is absolute only because it formulates the essential relation of man with God and of man with man. Moreover, war for the sake of war is a crime. War is justifiable only if it is the necessary means for securing peace. St. Augustine has said: "Peace must not be a preparation for war. And war is not to be made except for the attainment of peace." In the light of this teaching, which is repeated by St. Thomas Aquinas, patriotism is seen in its religious character. Family interests, class interests, party interests, and the material good of the individual take their place, in the scale of values, below the ideal of patriotism, for that ideal is Right, which is absolute. Furthermore, that ideal is the public recognition of Right in national matters, and of national Honor. Now there is no Absolute except God. God alone, by His sanctity and His sovereignty, dominates all human interests and human wills. And to affirm

the absolute necessity of the subordination of all things to Right, to Justice, and to Truth is implicitly to affirm God.

When, therefore, humble soldiers whose heroism we praise answer us with characteristic simplicity, "We only did our duty," or "We were bound in honor," they express the religious character of their patriotism. Which of us does not feel that patriotism is a sacred thing, and that a violation of national dignity is in a manner a profanation and a sacrilege?

I was asked lately by a staff officer whether a soldier falling in a righteous cause — and our cause is such, to demonstration — is not veritably a martyr. Well, he is not a martyr in the rigorous theological meaning of the word, inasmuch as he dies in arms, whereas the martyr delivers himself, undefended and unarmed, into the hands of the executioner. But if I am asked what I think of the eternal salvation of a brave man who has consciously given his life in defense of his country's honor, and in vindication of violated justice, I shall not hesitate to reply that without any doubt whatever Christ crowns his military valor, and that death, accepted in this Christian spirit, assures the safety of that man's soul. "Greater love than this no man hath," said Our Savior, "that a man lay down his life for his friends." And the soldier who dies to save his brothers, and to defend the hearths

and altars of his country, reaches this highest of all degrees of charity. He may not have made a close analysis of the value of his sacrifice; but must we suppose that God requires of the plain soldier in the excitement of battle the methodical precision of the moralist or the theologian? Can we who revere his heroism doubt that his God welcomes him with love?

Christian mothers, be proud of your sons. Of all griefs, of all our human sorrows, yours is perhaps the most worthy of veneration. I think I behold you in your affliction, but erect, standing at the side of the Mother of Sorrows, at the foot of the Cross. Suffer us to offer you not only our condolence but our congratulation. Not all our heroes obtain temporal honors, but for all we expect the immortal crown of the elect. For this is the virtue of a single act of perfect charity: it cancels a whole lifetime of sins. It transforms a sinful man into a saint.

Assuredly a great and a Christian comfort is the thought that not only amongst our own men, but in any belligerent army whatsoever, all who, in good faith, submit to the discipline of their leaders in the service of a cause they believe to be righteous, are sharers in the eternal reward of the soldier's sacrifice. And how many may there not be among these young men of twenty who, had they survived, might possibly not have had the resolution to live altogether

well, and yet in the impulse of patriotism had the resolution to die so well?

Is it not true, my Brethren, that God has the supreme art of mingling His mercy with His wisdom and His justice? And shall we not acknowledge that if war is a scourge for this earthly life of ours, a scourge whereof we cannot easily estimate the destructive force and the extent, it is also for multitudes of souls an expiation, a purification, a force to lift them to the pure love of their country and to perfect Christian unselfishness?

ENDURANCE

We may now say, my Brethren, without unworthy pride, that our little Belgium has taken a foremost place in the esteem of nations. I am aware that certain onlookers, notably in Italy and in Holland, have asked how it could be necessary to expose this country to so immense a loss of wealth and of life, and whether a verbal manifesto against hostile aggression, or a single cannon-shot on the frontier, would not have served the purpose of protest. But assuredly all men of good feeling will be with us in our rejection of these paltry counsels. Mere utilitarianism is no sufficient rule of Christian citizenship.

On the 19th of April, 1839, a treaty was signed in London by King Leopold, in the name of Belgium, on the one part, and by the Emperor

of Austria, the King of France, the Queen of England, the King of Prussia, and the Emperor of Russia, on the other; and its seventh article decreed that Belgium should form a separate and perpetually neutral State, and should be held to the observance of this neutrality in regard to all other States. The co-signatories promised, for themselves and their successors, upon their oath, to fulfil and to observe that treaty in every point and every article without contravention, or tolerance of contravention. Belgium was thus bound in honor to defend her own independence. She kept her oath. The other Powers were bound to respect and to protect her neutrality. Germany violated her oath; England kept hers.

These are the facts.

The laws of conscience are sovereign laws. We should have acted unworthily had we evaded our obligation by a mere feint of resistance. And now we would not rescind our first resolution; we exult in it. Being called upon to write a most solemn page in the history of our country, we resolved that it should be also a sincere, also a glorious page. And as long as we are required to give proof of endurance, so long we shall endure.

All classes of our citizens have devoted their sons to the cause of their country; but the poorer part of the population have set the noblest example, for they have suffered also priva-

tion, cold, and famine. If I may judge of the general feeling from what I have witnessed in the humbler quarters of Malines, and in the most cruelly afflicted districts of my diocese, the people are energetic in their endurance. They look to be righted; they will not hear of surrender.

Affliction is, in the hand of Divine Omnipotence, a two-edged sword. It wounds the rebellious, it sanctifies him who is willing to endure.

God proveth us, as St. James has told us, but He "is not a tempter of evils." All that comes from Him is good, a ray of light, a pledge of love. "But every man is tempted by his own concupiscence. . . . Blessed is he that endureth temptation, for when he hath been proved he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love Him."

Truce, then, my Brethren, to all murmurs of complaint. Remember St. Paul's words to the Hebrews, and through them to all of Christ's flock, when, referring to the bloody sacrifice of Our Lord upon the cross, he reminded them that they had not yet resisted unto blood. Not only to the Redeemer's example shall you look, but also to that of the thirty thousand, perhaps forty thousand, men who have already shed their life-blood for their country. In comparison with them what have you endured who are deprived of the daily comforts of your lives,

your newspapers, your means of travel, communication with your families? Let the patriotism of our army, the heroism of our King, of our beloved Queen in her magnanimity, serve to stimulate us and support us. Let us bemoan ourselves no more. Let us deserve the coming deliverance. Let us hasten it by our virtue even more than by our prayers. Courage, Brethren. Suffering passes away; the crown of life for our souls, the crown of glory for our nation, shall not pass.

I do not require of you to renounce any of your national desires. On the contrary, I hold it as part of the obligations of my episcopal office to instruct you as to your duty in face of the Power that has invaded our soil and now occupies the greater part of our country. The authority of that Power is no lawful authority. Therefore in soul and conscience you owe it neither respect, nor attachment, nor obedience.

The sole lawful authority in Belgium is that of our King, of our Government, of the elected representatives of the nation. This authority alone has a right to our affection, our submission.

Thus, the invader's acts of public administration have in themselves no authority, but legitimate authority has tacitly ratified such of those acts as affect the general interest, and this ratification, and this only, gives them juridic value.

Occupied provinces are not conquered provinces. Belgium is no more a German province

than Galicia is a Russian province. Nevertheless the occupied portion of our country is in a position it is compelled to endure. The greater part of our towns, having surrendered to the enemy on conditions, are bound to observe those conditions. From the outset of military operations the civil authorities of the country urged upon all private persons the necessity of abstention from hostile acts against the enemy's army. That instruction remains in force. It is our army, and our army solely, in league with the valiant troops of our Allies, that has the honor and the duty of national defense. Let us intrust the army with our final deliverance.

Towards the persons of those who are holding dominion among us by military force, and who assuredly cannot but be sensible of the chivalrous energy with which we have defended, and are still defending, our independence, let us conduct ourselves with all needful forbearance. Some among them have declared themselves willing to mitigate, as far as possible, the severity of our situation and to help us to recover some minimum of regular civic life. Let us observe the rules they have laid upon us so long as those rules do not violate our personal liberty, nor our consciences as Christians, nor our duty to our country. Let us not take bravado for courage, nor tumult for bravery.

You especially, my dearest Brethren in the

Priesthood, be you at once the best examples of patriotism and the best supporters of public order. On the field of battle you have been magnificent. The King and the Army admire the intrepidity of our military chaplains in face of death, their charity at the work of the ambulance. Your Bishops are proud of you.

You have suffered greatly. You have endured much calumny. But be patient; history will do you justice. I to-day bear my witness for you.

Wherever it has been possible I have questioned our people, our clergy, and particularly a considerable number of priests who had been deported to German prisons, but whom a principle of humanity, to which I gladly render homage, has since set at liberty. Well, I affirm upon my honor, and I am prepared to assert upon faith of my oath, that until now I have not met a single ecclesiastic, secular or regular, who had once incited civilians to bear arms against the enemy. All have loyally followed the instructions of their Bishops, given in the early days of August, to the effect that they were to use their moral influence over the civil population so that order might be preserved and military regulations observed.

I exhort you to persevere in this ministry of peace, which is for you the sanest form of patriotism; to accept with all your hearts the

privations you have to endure; to simplify still further, if it is possible, your way of life. One of you who is reduced by robbery and pillage to a state bordering on total destitution, said to me lately, "I am living now as I wish I had lived always."

Multiply the efforts of your charity, corporeal and spiritual. Like the great Apostle, do you endure daily the cares of your Church, so that no man shall suffer loss and you not suffer loss, and no man fall and you not burn with zeal for him. Make yourselves the champions of all those virtues enjoined upon you by civic honor as well as by the Gospel of Christ. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever modest, whatsoever just, whatsoever holy, whatsoever lovely, whatsoever of good fame, if there be any virtue, if any praise of discipline, think on these things." So may the worthiness of our lives justify us, my most dear Colleagues, in repeating the noble claim of St. Paul: "The things which ye have learned, and received, and heard, and seen, in me, these do ye, and the God of peace shall be with you."

CONCLUSION

Let us continue, then, dearest Brethren, to pray, to do penance, to attend Holy Mass, and to receive Holy Communion for the sacred intention of our dear country. . . . I recommend

parish priests to hold a funeral service on behalf of our fallen soldiers, on every Saturday.

Money, I know well, is scarce with you all. Nevertheless, if you have little, give of that little, for the succor of those among your fellow countrymen who are without shelter, without fuel, without sufficient bread. I have directed my parish priests to form for this purpose, in every parish, a relief committee. Do you second them charitably and convey to my hands such alms as you can save from your superfluity, if not from your necessities, so that I may be the distributor to the destitute who are known to me.

Our distress has moved the other nations. England, Ireland, and Scotland; France, Holland, the United States, Canada, have vied with each other in generosity for our relief. It is a spectacle at once most mournful and most noble. Here again is a revelation of the Providential Wisdom which draws good from evil. In your name, my Brethren, and in my own, I offer to the governments and the nations that have succored us the assurance of our admiration and our gratitude.

With a touching goodness our Holy Father Benedict the Fifteenth has been the first to incline his heart towards us. When, a few moments after his election, he deigned to take me in his arms, I was bold enough there to ask that

the first Pontifical Benediction he spoke should be given to Belgium, already in deep distress through the war. He eagerly closed with my wish, which I knew would also be yours. To-day, with delicate kindness, His Holiness has decided to renounce the annual offering of Peter's Pence from Belgium. In a letter dated on the beautiful festival of the Immaculate Virgin, December the eighth, he assures us of the part he bears in our sufferings, he prays for us, calls down upon our Belgium the protection of Heaven, and exhorts us to hail in the then approaching advent of the Prince of Peace the dawn of better days. Here is the text of this valued message:

"*To our dear Son, Désiré Mercier, Cardinal Priest of the Holy Roman Church, of the title of St. Peter in Chains, Archbishop of Malines, at Malines.*

"Our Dear Son,

Health and Apostolic Benediction.

"The fatherly solicitude which we feel for all the faithful whom Divine Providence has intrusted to our care causes us to share their griefs even more fully than their joys.

"Could we then fail to be moved by keenest sorrow at the sight of the Belgian nation which we so dearly love, reduced by a most cruel and most disastrous war to this lamentable state?

"We behold the King and his august family, the members of the Government, the chief persons of the country, bishops, priests, and a whole people enduring woes which must fill with pity all gentle hearts, and which our own soul, in the fervor of paternal love, must be the first to compassionate. Thus, under the burden of this distress and this mourning, we call, in our prayers, for an end to such misfortunes. May the God of mercy hasten the day! Meanwhile we strive to mitigate, as far as in us lies, this excessive suffering. Therefore the step taken by our dear Son, Cardinal Hartmann, Archbishop of Cologne, at whose request it was arranged that French or Belgian priests detained in Germany should have the treatment of officers, gave us great satisfaction, and we have expressed our thanks to him for his action.

"As regards Belgium, we have been informed that the faithful of that nation, so sorely tried, did not neglect, in their piety, to turn towards us their thoughts, and that even under the blow of so many calamities they proposed to gather this year, as in all preceding years, the offerings to St. Peter, which supply the necessities of the Apostolic See. This truly incomparable proof of piety and of attachment filled us with admiration; we accept it with all the affection that is due from a grateful heart; but having regard to the painful position in which our dear children

are placed, we cannot bring ourselves to favor the fulfillment of that project, noble though it is. If any alms are to be gathered, our wish is that the money should be entirely devoted to the benefit of the Belgian people, who are as illustrious by reason of their nobility and their piety as they are to-day worthy of all sympathy.

"Amid the difficulties and anxieties of the present hour we would remind the sons who are so dear to us that the arm of God is not shortened, that He is ever able to save, that His ear is not deaf to prayer.

"Let the hope of Divine aid increase with the approach of the festival of Christmas and of the mysteries that celebrate the Birth of Our Lord, and recall that peace which God proclaimed to mankind by His angels.

"May the souls of the suffering and afflicted find comfort and consolation in the assurance of the paternal tenderness that prompts our prayers. Yes, may God take pity upon the Belgian people, and grant them the abundance of all good.

"As a pledge of these prayers and good wishes, we now grant to all, and in the first place to you, our dear Son, the Apostolic Benediction.

"Given in Rome, at St. Peter's, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady, in the year MCMXIV, the first of our Pontificate.

"BENEDICT XV, POPE."

One last word, my dearest Brethren. At the outset of these troubles I said to you that in the day of the liberation of our territory we should give to the Sacred Heart and to the Blessed Virgin a public testimony of our gratitude. Since that date I have been able to consult my colleagues in the Episcopate, and in agreement with them, I now ask you to make, as soon as possible, a fresh effort to hasten the construction of the national basilica, promised by Belgium in honor of the Sacred Heart. As soon as the sun of peace shall shine upon our country, we shall redress our ruins, we shall restore shelter to those who have none, we shall rebuild our churches, we shall reconstitute our libraries, and we shall hope to crown this work of reconciliation by raising, upon the heights of the capital of Belgium, free and Catholic, that national basilica of the Sacred Heart. Furthermore, every year we shall make it our duty to celebrate solemnly, on the Friday following Corpus Christi, the festival of the Sacred Heart.

Lastly, in every region of the diocese the clergy will organize an annual pilgrimage of thanksgiving to one of the privileged sanctuaries of the Blessed Virgin, in order to pay especial honor to the Protectress of our national independence and universal Mediatrix of the Christian commonwealth.

The present letter shall be read on the fol-

lowing dates — on the first day of the year and on the Sundays following the day on which it shall severally reach you.

Accept, my dearest Brethren, my wishes and prayers for you, and for the happiness of your families, and receive, I pray you, my paternal benediction.

✠ D. J. Card. Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

II

AN APPEAL TO TRUTH

II

AN APPEAL TO TRUTH

NOVEMBER 24, 1915

To Their Eminences the Cardinals and Their Lordships the Bishops of Germany, Bavaria, and Austria-Hungary.

YOUR EMINENCES AND YOUR LORDSHIPS

FOR a year, we Catholic Bishops — you, the Bishops of Germany on the one hand, and we, the Bishops of Belgium, France, and England, on the other — have presented a disconcerting spectacle to the world.

Hardly had the German armies trodden the soil of our country, when the rumor spread among you that our civilians were taking part in military operations; that the women of Visé and of Liège were gouging out the eyes of your soldiers; that the populace at Antwerp and at Brussels had plundered the property of expelled Germans.

In the first days of August, Dom Ildefons Herwegen, Abbot of Maria-Laach, sent a telegram to the Cardinal Archbishop of Malines, begging him, for the love of God, to protect the German soldiers from the tortures which our fellow citizens were supposed to be inflicting on them.

But it was common knowledge that our Government had taken all necessary measures to insure that all citizens were instructed in the laws of war: in every parish the inhabitants were obliged to leave their weapons at the town hall; the people were warned, by means of notices, that the only citizens authorized to bear arms were those regularly enrolled in the army; and the clergy, anxious to second the authority of the State, had given circulation to the instructions, published by the Government, orally, by parish notices, and by posting bills on the church doors.

Having been accustomed for a century to a reign of peace, we had no idea that anyone could honestly impute violent instincts to us. Strong in our integrity and in the sincerity of our peaceful intentions, we replied to the slanderous charges of *francs-tireurs* and "gouged eyes" by a shrug of the shoulders, convinced that the truth would not be long in manifesting itself.

The Belgian clergy and episcopate were in personal relations with many priests, monks, and bishops of Germany and of Austria; the Eucharistic Congresses of Cologne in 1909 and of Vienna in 1912 had given them the opportunity of knowing one another more closely and of mutually appreciating one another. We had also the assurance that the Catholics of the nations at war with ours would not judge us hastily; and, without being much disturbed by the contents of

the telegram of Dom Ildefons, the Cardinal of Malines contented himself with begging him to unite with us in preaching humanity; "for," he added, "we are informed that the German troops are shooting innocent Belgian priests."

From the very first days of August, crimes had been committed at Battice, Visé, Berneau, Herve, and elsewhere, but we tried to hope that they would remain isolated cases, and knowing the very distinguished connections of Dom Ildefons, we put great reliance on the following declaration, which he was good enough to send us on August 11:—"I am informed, on the highest authority, that a formal order has been given by the military command to the German soldiers to spare the innocent. As regards the very deplorable fact that even priests have lost their lives, I would call your Lordship's attention to the circumstance that the costumes of priests and monks have lately become objects of suspicion and offense, since French spies have made use of the ecclesiastical costume, and even of that of nuns, in order to disguise their hostile intentions."

Nevertheless, the acts of hostility against the innocent population continued.

On August 18, 1914, the Bishop of Liège wrote to Commandant Bayer, Governor of the town of Liège: "Several villages have been destroyed one after the other; important people,

among them some priests, have been shot; others have been arrested, and all have protested their innocence. I know the priests of my diocese; I cannot believe that a single one of them has been guilty of acts of hostility towards German soldiers. I have visited several ambulances and I have seen that the German wounded are cared for there with the same attention as the Belgian. They admit it themselves." [1]

No reply was received to this letter.

At the beginning of September the German Emperor lent the weight of his authority to the scandalous accusations of which our innocent people were the object. He sent to Mr. Wilson, the President of the United States, a telegram, which, as far as we know, has not been withdrawn to this hour: "The Belgian Government has publicly encouraged the civilian population to take part in this war, for which it has been long carefully preparing. The cruelties committed in the course of this guerrilla warfare, by women and even by priests on doctors and nurses, have been such that my Generals have been obliged at last to have recourse to the severest measures to punish the guilty, and to hinder the bloodthirsty

[1] See page 65 for the complete text of the letter of the Bishop of Liège. The protest was repeated on August 21 to General von Kolowe, who had become military governor of Liège; then on August 29 to His Excellency, Baron von der Goltz, Governor-General of the occupied provinces of Belgium, and residing, at this time, in the episcopal palace of Liège.

population from continuing to commit these abominable crimes. Several villages, and even the town of Louvain, have had to be destroyed (except the very beautiful Town Hall) for our defense and the protection of my troops. My heart bleeds when I see that such measures are rendered inevitable, and when I think of the numberless innocent people who have lost their homes and property in consequence of the crimes in question."

This telegram was posted up in Belgium by order of the German Government on September 11. The very next day, September 12, the Bishop of Namur asked for an interview with the military Governor of Namur, and protested against the accusation which the Emperor sought to make against the Belgian clergy. He maintained the innocence of all the members of the clergy who had been shot or ill-treated, and declared that he was himself ready to publish any guilty deeds which were in reality established.

The offer of the Bishop of Namur was not accepted, and his protest had no result.

Calumny was thus given a free course. The German press fomented it. The organ of the Catholic Center, the *Cologne Gazette*, rivaled the Lutheran press in its chauvinisms, and on the day when thousands of our fellow citizens (ecclesiastics and laity from Visé, Aerschot, Wesemel, Hérent, Louvain, and twenty other localities as

innocent of deeds of war or of cruelties as you and we), were taken prisoners, led through the stations of Aix-la-Chapelle and Cologne, and for hours were exhibited as a spectacle for the morbid curiosity of the Rhenish metropolis, they had the pain of finding that their Catholic brethren poured out as many insults on them as the Lutherans of Celle, Soltau, and Magdeburg.

Not a voice in Germany was raised in defense of the victims.

The legend, which turned innocent into guilty and crime into an act of justice, thus gained credence, and, on May 10, 1915, the "White Book," the official organ of the German Empire, did not scruple to repeat the same charges, and to circulate in neutral countries these odious and cowardly lies: "It is indisputable that German wounded have been robbed, murdered, and even frightfully mutilated by the Belgian population, and that even women and young girls have taken part in these abominations. The eyes of wounded Germans have been gouged out, their ears, noses, fingers, and sexual organs cut off, or their bowels opened. In other cases German soldiers have been poisoned, hanged from trees, sprinkled with boiling liquids, and sometimes burnt, so that they have died in frightful agony. These brutish proceedings of the population not only violate the rules expressly laid down by the Geneva Convention as to the

care and attention due to the enemy wounded, but are contrary to the fundamental principles of the laws of war and of humanity." [1]

Put yourselves, for a moment, in our place, dear Brethren in the faith and priesthood.

We know that these shameless accusations of the Imperial Government are calumnies from end to end. We know it, and we swear it.

Now, your Government, to justify them, calls evidence which has not been submitted to any cross-examination.

Is it not your duty, not only in charity, but in strict justice, to enlighten yourselves and your flocks, and to furnish us with the opportunity of establishing our innocence legally?

You already owed us this satisfaction in the name of Catholic charity, which is above national struggles; you owe it to us to-day in strict justice, because a Committee, which has at least your tacit approval, and is composed of the most highly esteemed politicians, scientists, and theologians in Germany, has supported the official accusations, and has intrusted to the pen of a Catholic priest, Professor A. J. Rosenberg, of Paderborn, the task of summing them up in a book, entitled "The Lying Accusations of the French Catholics against Germany." It has thus thrown upon Catholic Germany the responsibility

[1] "Die völkerrechtswidrige Führung des belgischen Volkskriegs: Denkschrift" (S. 4).

for the active and public propagation of the calumny against the Belgian people.

When the French book, in reply to which the German Catholics publish their own, came out, their Eminences, Cardinal von Hartmann, Archbishop of Cologne, and Cardinal von Bettinger, Archbishop of Munich, felt impelled to send a telegram to their Emperor in these terms: "Revolted by the libels against the German Fatherland and its glorious army, contained in the work 'The German War and Catholicism,' we feel in our hearts the necessity of expressing our sorrowful indignation to Your Majesty in the name of all the German Bishops. We shall not fail to make our complaint to the Supreme Head of the Church."

Now, most reverend Eminences and venerated Colleagues of the German Episcopacy, in our turn, we, Archbishop and Bishops of Belgium, revolted by the calumnies against our Belgian land and its glorious army, contained in the Imperial "White Book," and reproduced in the reply of the German Catholics to the work of the French Catholics, we also feel impelled to express to our King, to our Government, to our army, and to our country our sorrowful indignation.

And, in order that our protest should not stand in conflict with yours without any useful result, we ask you to agree to help us to set up a tribunal to hear both sides. You will appoint, by virtue

of your office, as many members as you wish and such as you please to choose. We will appoint the same number — for instance, three on each side. We will join in asking the Bishops of a neutral State, Holland, Spain, Switzerland, or the United States, to choose us an arbitrator, who will preside over the sittings of the tribunal.

You have carried your complaints to the Supreme Head of the Church.

It is not just that he should hear your voice only.

You will be honest enough to help us to make ours heard.

Both you and we have the same duty — to lay before His Holiness attested documents on which he may be able to found his decision.

You are not ignorant of the efforts which we have repeatedly made, to obtain from the Power, which is in occupation of Belgium, the establishment of a tribunal of inquiry.

The Cardinal of Malines, on two occasions, in writing, January 24, 1915, and February 10, 1915, and the Bishop of Namur, in a letter to the military Governor of his Province, April 12, 1915, urged the establishment of a tribunal to be composed of an equal number of German and Belgian arbitrators and presided over by a representative of a neutral State.

Our solicitations met with an obstinate refusal. Yet the German authorities were careful to set

up inquiries; but they wanted them to be one-sided, that is, without any legal value.

After having refused the inquiry which the Cardinal of Malines asked for, the German authorities proceeded to various localities, where priests had been shot and peaceable citizens massacred or made prisoners, and there took the depositions of witnesses, some of whom were chosen indiscriminately and others carefully selected. Sometimes it was in the presence of a representative of the local authority, who was ignorant of the German language, and so was obliged to accept and to sign on trust the official reports. They believed in this way they could form conclusions which might afterwards be presented to the public as the results of examination and cross-examination.

The German inquiry at Louvain in November, 1914, was conducted under these conditions. It is thus devoid of authority.

So it is natural that we should turn to you.

You will grant us the Court of Arbitration, which the occupying Power has refused us. You will obtain for us from your Government a public declaration that the witnesses will be asked by you and us to tell all they know without fear of reprisals. Before you, under the shelter of your moral authority, they will feel more secure, and will be encouraged to relate what they have seen and heard; the world will have faith in the Epis-

copate of our two united countries; our joint control will guarantee the authenticity of the witnesses and the fidelity of the official reports. An inquiry, so conducted, will inspire confidence.

We ask for this inquiry, Your Eminences and venerated Colleagues, above all, to avenge the honor of the Belgian people. Slanders on the part of your people and its highest representatives have violated it. You know, as well as we, the adage of theology, moral, human, Christian and Catholic — no pardon without restitution: *Non remittitur peccatum, nisi restituatur ablatum.*

Your people, through the mouthpiece of their political powers and highest moral authorities, have accused our fellow citizens of having committed atrocities and horrors upon wounded Germans, of which the "White Book" and the Catholic manifesto, above mentioned, pointed out the details; we oppose a formal denial to all these accusations, and we ask to be allowed to prove the facts upon which we found this denial.

In return, in order to justify the atrocities committed in Belgium by the German army, the political Power by the very heading of the "White Book," *Die völkerrechtswidrige Führung des belgischen Volkskriegs* (the violation of international law by the methods of war employed by the Belgian people), and the hundred Catholic signatories of the work, *The German War and*

Catholicism; a German reply to French attacks, affirm that the German army in Belgium legitimately defended itself against a treacherous organization of *francs-tireurs*.

We declare that nowhere in Belgium was there an organization of *francs-tireurs*, and we claim the right to prove the truth of our assertion in the name of our calumniated national honor.

You will call whom you wish before the tribunal, at which all parties will be present. We will invite to appear there all the priests of the parishes where civilians, priests, monks, or laymen were put to death or threatened with death to the cry of *Man hat geschossen* (someone has fired). We will ask all these priests, if you wish, to sign their depositions on oath, and then, at the risk of maintaining that all the Belgian clergy is perjured, you will be obliged to accept the conclusions of this solemn and decisive inquiry, and the civilized world will be also unable to deny them.

But, your Eminences and venerated Colleagues, we should remind you that you have the same interest as ourselves in setting up a court of honor.

For we, through direct experience, know and declare that the German army gave itself up in Belgium, in a hundred different places, to plundering, incendiarism, imprisonments, massacres, and sacrileges, contrary to all justice and to every sentiment of humanity.

We declare this, notably in the cases of the communes, the names of which appeared in our Pastoral Letters and in the two notes addressed by the Bishops of Namur and of Liège, on October 31 and November 1, 1915, respectively, to His Holiness, Pope Benedict XV, to His Excellency, the Nuncio at Brussels, and to the ministers or representatives of neutral countries in residence at Brussels.

Fifty innocent priests and thousands of innocent Catholics were put to death; hundreds of others, whose lives have been saved by circumstances independent of the will of their persecutors, were in danger of death; thousands of innocent persons, with no previous trial, were imprisoned; many of them underwent months of detention, and, when they were released, the most minute questioning, to which they were submitted, revealed no guilt in any of them.

These crimes cry to heaven for vengeance.

If, in formulating these denunciations, we are calumniating the German army, or if the military authority had just reasons for commanding or permitting those acts which we call criminal, it is to the honor and the national interest of Germany to confute us. So long as German justice is denied, we claim the right and the duty of denouncing what, in all sincerity, we consider as a grave attack on justice and on our honor.

The Chancellor of the German Empire, at the

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sitting on August 4, declared that the invasion of Luxembourg and of Belgium was "contrary to the principles of international law." He recognized that, "in disregarding the rightful protestations of the Governments of Luxembourg and of Belgium, he committed a wrong which he promised to make good." The Pope, alluding intentionally to Belgium, as well as condescending to write in that sense to the Minister, Monsieur van der Heuvel, by his Eminence, Cardinal Gasparri, Secretary of State, pronounced in his Consistorial address of January 22, 1915, this irrevocable decision: "It appertains to the Roman Pontiff, whom God has set up as sovereign interpreter and avenger of 'eternal law,' to proclaim, before all things, that no one can for any reason whatever violate justice."

Since then, however, politicians and casuists have attempted to evade or to weaken those decisive words. In their reply to the French Catholics, the German Catholics indulge in the same paltry subtleties, and would like to prove them by a fact. They have at their disposal two testimonies: one, anonymous, from someone who said he saw, on July 26, some French officers on the Boulevard Anspach, at Brussels, in conversation with some Belgian officers; the other was from a certain Gustave Lochard, of Rimogne, who deposes that "two regiments of French dragoons, the 28 and the 30, and a

battery crossed the Belgian frontier on the evening of July 31, 1914, and remained entirely on Belgian soil for the whole following week."

Now, the Belgian Government declare "that before the declaration of war, no French troop, however small, had entered Belgium." And they add, "There is no honest evidence which can confute this assertion."

The Government of our King therefore declares the statement of the German Catholics to be an error.

Here we have a question of paramount importance, both political and moral, on which it is our duty to enlighten the public conscience.

But if, nevertheless, you decline the examination of this general question, we would ask you, at any rate, to attempt to check the evidence upon which the German Catholics have relied as decisive against us. The deposition of this Gustave Lochard rests on facts easy to check. The German Catholics will be anxious to clear themselves of the reproach of error and will make it a duty to their consciences to retract, if they have allowed themselves to be deceived to our prejudice.

We are well aware that you are reluctant to believe that the regiments whose discipline, honesty, and religious faith you say you know, could have allowed themselves to commit the inhuman deeds with which we reproach them.

NAZARETH COLLEGE
LIBRARY

You want to persuade yourselves that it is not so, because it cannot be so.

And, constrained by the evidence, we reply to you that it can be, because it is.

In face of facts no presumption holds good.

For you, as for us, there is only one issue: the proof of the facts by a commission whose impartiality is, and appears to all, unimpeachable.

We have no difficulty in understanding your feelings.

Pray believe that we also respect the spirit of discipline, of industry, and of faith, of which we had so often received proofs and witnessed the manifestations amongst your fellow countrymen. Very many are the Belgians who confess to-day the bitterness of their deception. But they have lived through the sinister events of August and September. In spite of themselves the truth has overcome their most deeply rooted impressions.

The fact is no longer to be denied — Belgium has suffered martyrdom.

When foreigners from neutral countries — Americans, Dutch, Swiss, Spaniards — question us as to the manner in which the German invasion was conducted, and when we tell them of certain scenes to the horror of which, in spite of ourselves, we are compelled to testify, we strive to lessen the impression which the narrative would

make, feeling that the naked truth passes the bounds of credibility.

Nevertheless, when, in presence of the whole evidence, you have been able to analyze the causes, both remote and immediate, of what one of your generals (in face of the ruins of the little village of Schaffen-lez-Diest, and of the martyrdom of the pastor of the parish) called "a tragic error"; when you have heard of the influences which your soldiers were under at the moment they entered Belgium, in the intoxication of their first successes, the à priori unlikelihood of the truth will appear to you, as to us, less of a stumbling-block.

Above all, Your Eminences and venerated Colleagues, do not allow yourselves to be kept back by the empty pretext that an inquiry to-day would be premature.

Strictly speaking, we might say so, on our side, because, at the present hour the inquiry would take place under conditions unfavorable to us. Our population has been in truth so deeply terrified, the prospect of reprisals is still so threatening, that the witnesses, whom we shall call before a tribunal, consisting partly of Germans, will hardly dare to tell the complete truth.

But there are decisive reasons against any delay.

The first, which will most directly touch your hearts, is that we are the weak and you are the

strong. You would not wish to abuse your power over us.

Public opinion ordinarily is with him who first makes himself master of it.

Now, while you have complete freedom to inundate neutral countries with your publications, we are imprisoned and reduced to silence. We are hardly allowed to raise our voices inside our churches; the sermons in them are censored, that is to say, travestied by hired spies; conscientious protests are styled revolt against public authority; our writings are stopped on the frontier, like an article of contraband. You alone enjoy freedom of speech and of pen, and if you are willing, through a spirit of charity and justice, to procure a little of the same freedom for the accused Belgians and to give them the opportunity of defending themselves, it is for you to come to their aid at the first possible moment. The old legal maxim, "*Audiatur et altera pars*," is inscribed, it is said, above many German law courts. In any case, with you as with us, it embodies the law in the proceedings of the episcopal courts, and in your case, too, no doubt as in ours, it is current in the popular tongue, under this image: "He who hears only one bell, hears only one sound."

Perhaps you will say: "It is past, forget it. Instead of throwing oil on the fire, rather turn your minds to forgiveness and unite your efforts

with those of the occupying Power, which asks only to stanch the wounds of the unfortunate Belgian people."

Your Eminences and dear Colleagues, do not add irony to injustice.

Have we not suffered enough? Have we not been, are we not yet, tortured cruelly enough?

It is past, say you; resign yourselves, forget.

Past! But all the wounds are bleeding! There is not one honest heart which does not swell with indignation. When we hear our Government say in the face of the world: "He is twice guilty who, after having violated the rights of another, still attempts, with the most audacious cynicism, to justify himself by imputing to his victim faults which he has never committed," our good folk stifle their curses only by force. Only yesterday a countryman of the neighborhood of Malines learned that his son had fallen on the battlefield. A priest was consoling him. The good man replied: "Oh! him, I give him to the country. But my eldest, they took him from me, the ——, and foully buried him in a ditch."

How do you think that we could obtain a sincere word of resignation and of pardon from these poor creatures who have known all these tortures, as long as those who have made them suffer refuse to admit it, or to utter a word of regret, or a promise of reparation?

Germany cannot now restore to us the blood which she has shed, the innocent lives which her arms have destroyed; but it is in her power to restore to the Belgian people its honor, which she has violated or permitted to be violated.

We ask this restitution from you — you who stand first among the representatives of Christian morality in the Church of Germany.

There is something more profoundly sad than political divisions and material disasters. It is the hatred which injustice, real or supposed, stores up in so many hearts created to love one another. Is it not upon us, the pastors of our people, that the duty lies of helping to get rid of these bad feelings, and of reëstablishing on its foundations of justice, to-day so shaken, the union in love of all the children of the great Catholic family?

The occupying Power speaks and writes of its intention to stanch our wounds.

But in the tribunal of the world intention is judged by action.

Now all that we poor Belgians, who submit for a time to the domination of the Empire, know, is that the Power which has staked its honor to govern us according to International Law codified in the Hague Convention, is ignoring its engagements. We are not speaking of particular abuses committed against individuals or communes, the character of which can only be estimated by

an investigation made after hearing both sides at the end of this war. We are considering at present only acts of the Government established by its official documents, posted up on the walls of our towns, and consequently involving directly its responsibility beyond any possible question.

Now the breaches of the Hague Convention, since the date of the occupation of our provinces, are numerous and flagrant. We set them out here under headings and we shall provide, in an Annex,[1] the proof of our allegations. The following are the chief breaches:

Collective punishments imposed on account of individual acts, contrary to Article 50 of the Hague Convention;

Compulsory labor for the enemy, contrary to Article 52;

New taxes, in violation of Articles 48, 49, and 52;

Abuse of requisitions in kind, in violation of Article 52;

Disregard of the laws in force in the country, contrary to Article 43.

These violations of International Law, which aggravate our unhappy lot and increase the ferments of revolt and hatred in hearts usually peaceable and kindly disposed, would not be continued if those who commit them did not feel

[1] See page 81.

that they were supported, if not by the positive approbation, at least by the complacent silence of all those who form public opinion in their own country.

Again, then, we confidently appeal to your charity; we are the weak, you are the strong; come and judge whether it is still permissible for you to refuse your aid.

There are, moreover, in regard to the establishment of a commission of inquiry by members of the Catholic Episcopate, arguments of a general kind.

We have already dwelt upon this. The spectacle which our divisions afford to the world is disconcerting; it is an occasion of scandal to it, and awakens in it blasphemous thoughts.

Our people do not understand how you can be unaware of the twofold flagrant iniquity that has been inflicted on Belgium — the violation of our neutrality and the inhuman conduct of your soldiers — or how, knowing it, you can refrain from raising your voice to condemn it, and to dissociate yourselves from it.

On the other hand, what ought to scandalize *your* population, Protestant and Catholic, is the rôle ascribed by your Press to the Belgian clergy, and to a nation over which, for the last thirty years, it is well known that a Catholic Government has ruled. "Take care," said the Bishop of Hildesheim to his clergy, no later than the 21st Sep-

tember, 1914, "these charges which the Press is circulating against priests, monks, and nuns of Catholic nations are making a rift between the Catholics and Protestants on German soil, and the religious future of the Empire is imperiled.[1]

The campaign of calumnies against our clergy and our people has not slackened. Erzberger, a deputy of the Center, seems to have taken upon himself to increase it. In Belgium itself, in the Cathedral of Antwerp, on the sixteenth Sunday after Whitsuntide, one of your priests, Heinrich Mohr, dared to declare from the pulpit of truth to the Catholic soldiers of your army: "Official documents have informed us how the Belgians have hanged German soldiers on trees, sprinkled them with boiling liquid, and burnt them alive."[2]

[1] "For in such rumors it is not only a question of the honor of colleagues, but also the endangering of the holy interests of the Catholics in Germany. These rumors, indeed, are calculated to undermine slowly the peaceful relations between the members of the different faiths, to bring about mistrust, particularly towards the clergy, and to cause deep vexation and confusion amongst Catholics in non-Catholic countries. For this reason it is particularly important for the priest in non-Catholic countries to be on his guard against the insinuations which may be current in his parish with regard to the clergy." Dr. Adolf Bertram, Bishop of Hildesheim: *Vigilance as to Insinuations as regards the Clergy.*

[2] "We have read horrible things in the official reports: how the Belgians hanged German soldiers on the trees, and scalded them with hot tar and burnt them alive." A sermon on the 16th Sunday after Whitsuntide, by Heinrich Mohr, Chaplain to the Forces. The sermon has been published in the periodical, *The Voice of Home*, No. 34, Freiburg in Br. 1915. Herder.

There is only one means of stopping these calumnies, and that is to bring the whole truth to the light of day, and to condemn the true culprits publicly by religious authority.

There is another source of scandal for honest men, believers or non-believers, in the habit of giving prominence to the advantages and the disadvantages which Catholic interests would derive from the success either of the Triple Alliance or of the Quadruple Entente. Professor Schrörs, of the University of Bonn,[1] was the first, so far as we know, to devote his leisure to these alluring calculations.

The religious results of the war are the secret of God, and none of us is in the Divine confidence.

But there is a higher question than that — the question of morality, of right, of honor.

"Seek ye first," said Our Lord in the Holy Gospel, "the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

Do your duty, come what may!

Also we bishops at this present moment have a moral duty, and therefore a religious one, which takes precedence of all others, that of searching out and proclaiming the truth.

Did not Christ, whose disciples and ministers we have the glorious honor to be, say: "For this

[1] "Der Krieg und der Katholizismus," by Dr. Heinrich Schrörs, Professor of Catholic Theology in the University of Bonn.

cause came I into the world that I should bear witness unto the truth.[1] *Ego ad hoc veni in mundum, ut testimonium perhibeam veritati.*"

On the solemn day of our episcopal consecration we vowed to God and the Catholic Church never to forsake the truth, to yield neither to ambition nor to fear when it should be necessary to show our love for it. *Veritatem diligat, neque eam unquam deserat aut laudibus aut timore superatus.*[2]

We have, therefore, in virtue of our vocation, a common *rôle* and a ground of sympathy. Confusion reigns in men's minds; what some call light, others designate as darkness; what is good to one is bad to another. We cherish the hope that the tribunal of impartial inquiry to which we have the honor of inviting your delegates will help to dissipate more than one uncertainty: *Non ponat lucem tenebras, nec tenebras lucem; non dicat malum bonum, nec bonum malum.* With all the warmth of his prayers, our Holy Father the Pope calls for peace; in the last letter he deigned to address to you at Fulda, after your last meeting, he urged you — he urges us all — to long for it with him. But he desires it only if it is based on respect for the rights and dignity of nations.[3] *Dum votis omnibus pacem expetimus,*

[1] John xviii. 37.
[2] *Pontificale Romanum:* de consecratione electi inepiscopum.
[3] *Acta Apostolicæ Sedis,* Vol. VII, October 6, 1915.

atque eam quidem pacem quae et justitiae sit opus et populorum congruat dignitati.

We shall respond then to the desire of our common Father by working together to cause Truth to shine forth and triumph, Truth on which must rest justice, the honor of nations, and at length peace.

We are, Your Eminences and Venerated Colleagues, your respectful servants and brothers in devotion.

D. J. Card. Mercier, *Archbishop of Malines*
Antoine, *Bishop of Ghent* [1]
Gustave J., *Bishop of Bruges* [1]
Thomas Louis, *Bishop of Namur*
Martin Hubert, *Bishop of Liège*
Amédée Crooij, *Bishop Designate of Tournai*

[1] The Belgian Bishops unanimously decided to address a joint letter to the German Bishops. They have one and all knowledge of the scheme of the present letter and have given their adherence to it; but, owing to the difficulty of communicating with the Bishops of Ghent and Bruges, it has been impossible to submit to them this letter as it was finally drawn up, and obtain their signatures to it.

Annex I

A letter addressed by the Lord Bishop of Liège, to Commandant Bayer, Governor of Liège, under date of August 18, 1914.

Monsieur le Commandant,

I address myself to you as a man and a Christian, and entreat you to put an end to the executions and reprisals. I have been informed time after time that several villages have been destroyed, that persons of note, some of whom were priests, have been shot; that others have been arrested, and that all have protested their innocence. As for such as are priests in my diocese, I cannot believe that a single one has been guilty of acts of hostility towards German soldiers. I have visited several field-hospitals, and I have seen that the wounded Germans there are cared for with the same attention as the Belgians. They admit it themselves. If soldiers of the Belgian army, stationed at the outposts, fired on the Germans entering Belgium, is that a crime to be imputed to the civilian population? And even if some civilians had helped the soldiers to drive back German scouts, can the entire population, women, children, and priests, be held responsible for it?

But I do not wish to discuss past acts; I only ask you, in the name of God and of humanity, to prevent reprisals upon unoffending populations. These reprisals can have no useful end, but will drive the population to despair. I shall be happy to discuss this subject with you, for I am confident that you, like myself, wish to lessen the evils of war rather than to increase them.

At the last moment I hear that the *curé* of R. has been arrested and taken to the Chartreuse. I do not know of what he is accused, but I do know that he is incapable of committing an act of hostility towards your soldiers: he is a good priest, gentle and charitable. I will be answerable for him, and I beg you to restore him to his parish.

Yours, etc.,

(*Signed*) M. H. RUTTEN
Bishop of Liège

This letter received no acknowledgment, but the same protests were renewed, on August 21, to General von Kolowe, who had meanwhile become Military Governor of Liège.

The same protests, strongly put and energetically urged, were renewed on August 29, in an interview with the Governor-General of occupied Belgium, von der Goltz Pasha, then residing in the episcopal palace with his staff.

(*Signed*) M. H. RUTTEN
Bishop of Liège

Annex II

This Annex contains:

1. A letter from his Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines, to the Kreischef of the district of Malines, under date January 24, 1915.

2. A communication from His Eminence the Cardinal of Malines, forwarded to the General Government through the agency of Adjutant von Flemming, under date February 10, 1915.

3. A letter from the Lord Bishop of Namur to the Military Governor of Namur, under date April 12, 1915.

4. A note referring to a partial inquiry made by an Austrian priest appointed by the *Wiener Priester Verein.*

5. Correspondence of the Cardinal of Malines with His Excellency the German Governor-General on the question of outrages suffered by the nuns.

1. In his pastoral letter of Christmas, 1914, the Cardinal of Malines published the names of the innocent priests who had been put to death by the German troops.

Count von Wengersky, Kreischef of the District of Malines, wrote to the Cardinal on January 20 as follows:

THE KREISCHEF TGB. No. 268/11.
MALINES, *January 20th*, 1915.

TO HIS EMINENCE THE CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF MALINES,

According to a newspaper notice several innocent priests are stated to have been put to death in the diocese of Malines.

In order that an inquiry may be set on foot may I beg Your Eminence to be so good as to let me know whether any priests, and, if so, which, have been put to death, being innocent, in the diocese of Malines.

I am very anxious to learn what circumstances have led up to this, which troops prove to be concerned, and on which days it happened.

THE KREISCHEF
(*Signed*) WENGERSKY
Colonel

The Cardinal replied as follows to Count von Wengersky:

THE PALACE OF THE ARCHBISHOP,
MALINES, *January 24th*, 1915.

M. LE KREISCHEF,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, 268/11, dated January 20, which you have been so good as to address to me.

The names of the priests and monks of the diocese of Malines, who, to my knowledge, were put to death by the German troops, are as follows: Dupierreux, of the Company of Jesus; Brother Sebastien Allard, of the Society of St.

Joseph; Brother Candide, of the Society of the Brothers of Our Lady of Pity; Father Vincent, Conventual; Carette, a professor; Lombaerts, Goris, de Clerck, Dergent, Wouters, Van Bladel, *curés*.

At Christmas time I was not perfectly certain what had been the fate of the *curé* of Hérent. Since then his dead body has been discovered at Louvain and identified.

Other figures quoted in my pastoral letter must be increased to-day. Thus for Aerschot I gave the number of victims as 91. Now the total number of bodies of natives of Aerschot which have been exhumed had risen a few days ago to 143. But this is not the moment to dwell upon these particular cases; the proper place to give an account of them will be at the inquiry of which you give me hopes.

It will be a consolation to me to have full light thrown upon the events which I was compelled to mention in my Pastoral Letter and on others of the same nature.

But it is essential that the results of this inquiry should be made plain to all upon indisputable authority.

To insure this, I have the honor to propose to you, M. Le Comte, and, through your kind intervention, to the German authorities, that the commission of inquiry should be composed in equal numbers of German representatives and of Belgian magistrates, chosen by our Chief

Magistrate, and presided over by a representative of a neutral country. I venture to hope that his Excellency, the United States Minister, would not refuse to accept this chairmanship, or to intrust it to a representative of his own choice.

I have the honor to be, M. le Kreischef,

(*Signed*) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER
Archbishop of Malines.

MONSIEUR LE COMTE VON WENGERSKY, KREISCHEF, MALINES.

This request met with no reply.

2. On February 10, 1915, Adjutant von Flemming called at the Palace of Malines, in the name of the Kreischef, to repeat verbally the questions to which the Cardinal had already replied in writing in his letter of January 24. The Cardinal informed the Adjutant that questions of this nature must be formulated and answered in writing. In consequence, he drew up, in the following terms, the questions of the Kreischef and the replies which they admitted of, and the document was then signed by the Adjutant and the Cardinal of Malines.

THE PALACE OF THE ARCHBISHOP, MALINES.

Monsieur l'Adjutant von Flemming asks me in the name of the General Government:

1. Which are the communes where priests have been shot?
2. Which troops put them to death and on what day?

3. Whether the Bishop of the diocese maintains that these priests were innocent?

1. The names of the communes have been already printed in my Pastoral Letter of Christmas, 1914, on page 65.
2. The German Staff is in a better position than anyone else to know what troops were occupying a commune on any particular day. The populations easily recognize the German uniform, but do not distinguish, for the most part, the regiments which compose the army.
3. My personal and reasoned conviction is that the priests whose names I have quoted were innocent. But, as a matter of law, it is not for us to establish their innocence; it is for the military authorities who have treated them with this severity to establish their guilt.

Witnesses summoned to give evidence before a one-sided committee will generally be afraid of telling the whole truth. This can only be fully known and universally accepted on the condition that a mixed commission should be formed to collect it and to guarantee its impartiality and exactitude.

Also I can only repeat for the third time my proposal[1] for a mixed Commission, composed

[1] The proposal was formulated a first time in writing on January 24, and repeated verbally on February 8, by Monsignor van Roey, Vicar General, who had been summoned to the Commandatur at Malines.

partly of German magistrates and partly of Belgian magistrates, whose work it would be to throw full light on those facts, concerning which the General Government most properly desires to institute an inquiry. In order to give all desirable authority to the results of the inquiry, it is of importance that the tribunal should be presided over by a representative of a neutral State.

Given at Malines, February 10, 1915.

(*Signed*) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER
Archbishop of Malines

(*Signed*) VON FLEMMING
Rittmeister und Adjutant des Kreischefs in Mecheln

This letter remained without reply.

3. On the occasion of the publication of a confidential letter from the Prussian Minister of War to the High Chancellor, the Lord Bishop of Namur published a reply to that document on April 12, 1915.

But the Military Governor of Namur disputed the assertions contained in the bishop's reply, without, however, entering into any particulars.

The latter maintained his statements, and added: "In consideration of the difference of views which separates us, there is only one way of bringing the facts to the light and before the eyes of everyone, namely, to intrust their examination to the commission of inquiry which

I have proposed. I am confident that Your Excellency will agree with this, and will recommend the suggestion to the Governor-General."

(*Signed*) T. L., *Bishop of Namur*

The proposal of the Lord Bishop of Namur received no reply.

4. A priest accredited by His Eminence Cardinal Piffl, Prince Archbishop of Vienna, made an inquiry in Belgium in the name of the *Wiener Priester Verein*. The results of this incomplete inquiry were published in the Tijd, of Amsterdam, and in the *Politiken*, of Copenhagen. They are overwhelmingly against the German military authorities. But, if we are correctly informed, the German and Austrian newspapers abstained from bringing them to the knowledge of their readers.

5. Before closing this Annex relating to the inquiries, we have to correct a mistake.

In their reply to the French Catholics, the German Catholics speak of the outrages upon the nuns, and write: "The German Governor-General in Belgium has addressed the Belgian bishops on this subject. . . . The Archbishop of Malines has allowed it to be known that he could furnish no exact information as to any case whatever of the outrages upon nuns in his diocese."

This last phrase is, in substance, correct, but

gives a wrong impression to the casual reader. What I wrote to the Governor-General was, that I could furnish him with no exact information, because my conscience forbade me to hand over to a tribunal of any kind the information (alas! very precise) in my possession. Outrages have been committed upon nuns. I think they are, fortunately, not numerous, but to my knowledge there have been several. Since the Governor-General has thought himself entitled to give the public an extract from the reply I had the honor of addressing to him on this delicate subject, it is my duty to reproduce here the entire text of our correspondence.

The following is the letter of March 30, 1915, written to me by the Governor-General:

THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL of Belgium.

BRUSSELS, *March 30th*, 1915.

YOUR EMINENCE,

A serious reproach has of late been repeatedly made in the foreign press, together with a number of other charges, which for the most part have already been proved incorrect, that German soldiers on the march through Belgium did not hesitate to assault Belgian nuns.

It is superfluous to point out, as to this, that such misdeeds (in case they should prove true) would certainly incur my own and the German Government's severest reprobation. At the same

time justice demands that accusations proved to be untrue should be duly repudiated. I assume that the disclosure of the full truth corresponds with the sense of justice as well as with the interests of the Catholic Church.

I think, therefore, that I may rely upon Your Eminence's cordial support when I beg you to help me in my efforts to discover the true facts.

The information which Your Eminence may desire to bring forward as to the violation of nuns in the said diocese will enable me to take the further steps necessary under the circumstances.

I have the honor to be

Your Eminence's most obedient,

(*Signed*) FHR. VON BISSING

TO HIS EMINENCE, THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF MALINES.

This is our reply:

THE PALACE OF THE ARCHBISHOP
MALINES, *April 16th*, 1915.

MONSIEUR LE GOUVERNEUR GÉNÉRAL,

I have received the letter No. 1243 which your Excellency has done me the honor of addressing me, and I regret having been hindered from replying to it earlier.

There are in fact rumors in circulation, accepted by certain papers, denied by others, on the question of the outrages which the Belgian nuns have had to suffer from German soldiers, and, in agreement with Your Excellency, I protest against

those who, lightly and without proof, publicly announce or support such odious accusations.

But, when Your Excellency asks me to help you in throwing light upon whether these imputations are well or ill founded, I am obliged to ask you a preliminary question.

Has the civil authority the right to hold an inquiry upon facts of so delicate a nature?

Whom would it question?

The confessor? The doctor? They are bound by professional secrecy.

The Sisters Superior? Do they always know the truth? And if they do know it, having learned it under the seal of secrecy, have they the right to speak?

Who would venture to question the victims? Would not that be cruel? Who would attempt to question witnesses at the risk of exposing the already wretched victims of violence to the burden of carrying the stain of dishonor in the face of public opinion?

So far as I am concerned, I should not dare to subject anyone to an examination upon so delicate a subject, and my conscience forbids me to hand over to another the confidences which have been made to me, or might be made to me, spontaneously on this matter.

Our duty, Your Excellency, is to discourage the public, by all means in our power, from giving countenance to these capricious and unwhole-

some allegations. I shall heartily approve of repression by law of those who, either from prejudice or from unpardonable levity, invent or spread them. But I consider that we cannot go further without trespassing upon the rights of conscience and exposing ourselves to the risk of violating its liberty.

Accept, Monsieur le Gouverneur Général, the assurance of my very high regard.

(*Signed*) D. J. Card. Mercier
Archbishop of Malines

To His Excellency,
Baron von Bissing, *Governor-General*, Brussels.

Annex III

We know, and we affirm, that the German army gave itself up in Belgium, in a hundred different places, to pillage, to incendiarism, imprisonments, massacres, and sacrileges, contrary to all justice and to every sentiment of humanity.

There are parts of Hainault and of the two Flanders, which are still to-day under special military control, whose disasters are consequently less well known to us. But below is an approximate list of localities which our protest covers.

1. Diocese of Namur. *Provinces of Namur and of Luxembourg.*

Tamines, Surice, Spontin, Namur, Ethe, Gomery, Latour, Aische-en-Refail, Alle, Arsimont, Auvelais, Bonnines, Bourseigne-Neuve, Bouge, Daussois, Dourbes, Ermeton-sur-Biert, Evrehailles, Felenne, Fosses, Franchimont, Franc-Waret, Frasne, Gedinne, Gelbressée, Hansinelle, Hanzinne, Hautbois, Hastière, Hermeton-sur-Meuse, Hingeon, Houdrémont, Jemeppe-sur-Sambre, Lisogne, Louette-Saint-Pierre, Mariembourg, Mettet, Monceau, Morville, Onhaye, Oret, Petigny, Romedenne, Somme-Leuze, Somzée, Stave, Temploux, Villers-en-Fagne, Wartet, Waulsort, Willersé, Yvoir, Anloy, Assenois, Baranzy, Bertrix, Briscol, Étalle, Framont, Frêne-

Opont, Freylange, Glaumont, Glaireuse, Hamipré, Herbeumont, Izel, Jéhonville, Maissin, Manhay, Musson, Mussy-la-Ville, Neufchâteau, Pin, Saint-Léger, etc., etc.

Thibessart, Biesme, Porcheresse, Graide, Nothomb, Rulles, Rosière-la-Grande, Bovigny, Gouvy, Champion, Jamoigne, Silenrieux, Les Bulles, Tintigny, Ansart, Rossignol, Sorinne, Bièvre, Behême, Léglise, Laneffe, Frénois, Villers-devant-Orval, Couvin, Houdemont, Chiny, Anthée, Ychippe, Conneux, Aye, Évelette, Florenville, Hollogne, Le Boux, Leuze, Marche, Sainte-Marie, Saint-Vincent.

Andenne, Dinant.

2. Diocese of Liège. *Provinces of Liège and of Limbourg.*

Battice, Herv, Bisé, Mouland, Hermée, Hallembaye, Louvegné, Lincé, Poulseur, Soumagne, Fecher, Melin, Julémont, Barchon, Lummen, Haelen, —, Lanaeken.

3. Diocese of Malines. *Provinces of Brabant and of Antwerp.*

Haekendover, Autgaerden, Grimde, Hougaerde, Cumptich, Hautem-Sainte-Marguerite, Vissenaeken, Bunsbeek, Lubbeek-Saint-Bernard, Wever, Attenrode, Cappellen (Glabbeek), Cortryck-Dutzel, Glabbeek, Pellenberg, Neer-Linter, Budingen, Heelen-bosch, Orsmael-Gussenhoven, Corbeek-Loo, Lovenjoul, Roosbeek, Schaffen, Molenstede, Wersbeek, Aerschot, Rillaer, Gelrode,

Wesemael, Hersselt, Rethy, Haecht, Rotselaer, Wackerzeel, Werchter, Tremeloo, Thildonck, Wespelaer, Boortmeerbeek, Rymenam, Hever, Louvain, Heverlé, Hérent, Berg, Campenhout, Bueken, Neder-Ockerzeel, Cortenberg, Delle, Boisschot, Goor, Heyst-op-den Berg, Beersel, Putte, Schrieck, Malines, Bonheyden, Wavre-Notre-Dame, Wavre-Sainte-Catherine, Waelhem, Leest, Hombeek, Sempst, Laer, Hofstade, Muysen, Schiplaeken, Konings-Hoyckt, Kessel, Lierre, Duffel, Blaesveld, Perck, Peuthy, Hautem, Elewyt, Weerde, Eppeghem, Pont-Brûlé, Grimberghen, Londerzeel, Meysse, Humbeek, Nieuwenrode, Beyghem, Wolverthem, Cappelle-au-Bois, Linsmeau, Wavre, Mousty.

4. Diocese of Ghent. *Eastern Flanders.*

Saint-Gilles, Lebbeke, Termonde.

5. Diocese of Tournai. *Province of Hainault Péronne.*

Annex IV

INFRACTIONS OF THE HAGUE CONVENTION

Germany signed the Hague Convention. The first German Governor-General, Baron von der Goltz, referred to the Hague Convention in an order published by him as early as November 12, 1914.

The second German Governor-General, Baron von Bissing, in a solemn proclamation of July 18, 1915, declared *his wish to administer Belgium according to the Hague Convention, regulating the laws and customs of war on land.* . . . He added: "His Majesty, the German Emperor, after the occupation of the Kingdom of Belgium by our victorious troops, has intrusted to me the administration of this country, and *has ordered me to carry out the obligations arising from the Hague Convention.*"

That is the legal aspect.

The following is the fact:

1. *Collective Punishments*

Article 50 of the Convention stipulates, "No collective penalty, pecuniary or otherwise, shall be enacted against populations on account of individual acts for which they could not be considered as jointly responsible."

Now the history of the occupation covers three periods: that of the invasion and those over which Baron von der Goltz and Baron von Bissing presided successively.

During the period of the invasion collective punishment was systematically inflicted and under every form. Proofs of this assertion abound. Here is one which suffices in itself:— As the invasion gained ground the Commander-in-Chief of the army caused to be posted up a proclamation in three languages, on red paper, in which he said:

The villages where acts of hostility shall be committed by the inhabitants against our troops *will be burned.*

For all destruction of roads, railways, bridges, etc., *the villages in the neighborhood* of the destruction *will be held responsible.*

The punishments announced above will be carried out severely and without mercy. *The whole community will be held responsible.* Hostages will be taken freely. The heaviest war taxes will be levied.

Under the government of Marshal von der Goltz a proclamation, signed by the hand of the Governor-General and promulgated on September 2, 1914, in the occupied territory, expressly stated: "It is the hard necessity of war that the punish-

ment of hostile acts *includes the innocent as well as the guilty.*"

Consequently collective punishment was applied unsparingly.

Thus, as a typical example, the city of Brussels was condemned to pay a fine of five millions, because one of its policemen, unknown to the communal administration, had been wanting in deference to a functionary of the German civil administration.

A notice signed *Baron von der Goltz*, posted up on October 7, 1914, applies the collective penalty to the family. It is there stated: "The Belgian Government have sent orders to rejoin the army to the militiamen of several classes. . . . All those who receive these orders are strictly forbidden to act upon them. . . . *In case of disobedience the family of the militiamen will be held equally responsible.*"

Under the government of General Baron von Bissing, that is from December 3, 1914, the *collective* punishments, in violation of Article 50, have been continual. Here are some specimens. On December 23, 1914, a notice posted in Brussels stated: "If the graves of fallen soldiers are damaged or violated, not only will the perpetrator be punished, but *the commune will also be made responsible.*"

A warning of the Governor-General, dated

January 26, 1915, renders the *members of the family* responsible if a Belgian fit for military service, between the ages of 16 and 40, goes to Holland.

In fact, upon the flimsiest pretexts, heavy fines are inflicted on communes. The commune of Puers was subjected to a fine of 3000 marks because a telegraph wire was broken, although the inquiry showed that it had given way through wear.

Malines, a working-class town, without resources, has had a fine of 20,000 marks inflicted on it because the Burgomaster did not inform the military authority of a journey which the Cardinal, deprived of the use of his motor-car, had been obliged to make on foot.

2. *Compulsory Labor for the Enemy*

According to Article 52 of the Hague Convention, "*requisitions* in kind and *service*" can be claimed from communities or from inhabitants only on three conditions:

On condition that they do not place on the population any obligation to take part in the operations of war against the nation.

On condition that they are claimed only with a view to the needs of the army of occupation.

On condition that they are in proportion to the resources of those from whom they are demanded.

It is striking to observe that Article 23 contains a final note proposed at the second Hague Congress, in 1907, by the German delegation. It is as follows: "A belligerent is forbidden to force the subjects of an enemy country to take part in operations of war directed against their country."

But —

1. *At the time of the invasion*, Belgian civilians, in twenty places, were made to take part in operations of war against their own country. At Termonde, Lebbeke, Dinant, and elsewhere in many places, *peaceable citizens, women, and children were forced to march in front of German regiments* or to make a screen before them.

At Liège and at Namur civilians were obliged to dig trenches and were employed on works of repairs at fortifications.

The system of hostages was carried out with a fierce cruelty. The proclamation of August 4, quoted above, declared, without circumlocution: "Hostages will be freely taken."

An official proclamation, posted at Liège, in the early days of August, ran thus: "Every aggression committed against the German troops by any persons other than soldiers in uniform, not only exposes the guilty person to be immediately shot, *but will also entail the severest reprisals against all the inhabitants and especially against those natives of Liège who have been detained as*

hostages in the citadel of Liège by the Commandant of the German troops."

These hostages are Monsignor Rutten, Bishop of Liège, M. Kleyer, burgomaster of Liège, the senators, representatives, and the permanent deputy and sheriff of Liège.

2. *Under the government of Field-Marshal von der Goltz* the requisitions for personal service in force in the month of August were continued under every form — digging trenches, work on the fortifications, carting, work on the roads, bridges, railways, etc.

An order of the Governor-General, published on November 19, declared: "Whosoever attempts to prevent by force, threat, *persuasion*, or other means, any persons disposed to carry out any work for purposes required by the German authorities from so carrying out this work, or obstructs any contractors intrusted by such authorities with the execution of this work, will be punished with imprisonment." The order does not fix the term of this imprisonment; it is a purely arbitrary measure. As to the treatment of hostages, severest measures were enacted.

A monstrous specimen of arbitrariness and cruelty is the proclamation posted in the communes of Beyne-Heusay, Grivegnée, Bois-de-Breux, by the Major in command, Dieckmann, on September 8, 1914. Here follows an extract:

"Beginning with September 7 I shall permit persons from the undermentioned communes to return to their homes. To make sure that this permission will not be abused, the Burgomasters of Beyne-Heusay and of Grivegnée must at once prepare lists of persons who will be retained as *hostages* at the fort of Fléron.

"*The lives of these hostages depend upon the inhabitants of the previously named communes comporting themselves peaceably under all circumstances.*

"I shall designate the persons to be detained as hostages from midday on one day until the next midday. If the substitute has not appeared in due time, the hostage remains another 24 hours at the Fort. After this second 24 hours, *the hostage runs the risk of death if the person concerned fails to appear. The priests and burgomasters and other members of the council are the first to be taken as hostages.*"

3. *Under the government of Baron von Bissing* the violations of Article 52 were flagrant. The deeds which took place in the railway workshops at Luttre and Malines, as well as in several communes in Western Flanders, are revolting.

Judge of them:

On March 23, 1915, at the arsenal at Luttre, the German authority posted a notice demanding return to work. On April 21, 200 workmen were called for. On April 27 soldiers went to fetch

the workmen from their homes and take them to the arsenal. In the absence of a workman a member of the family was arrested.

However, the men maintained their refusal to work, "because they were unwilling to coöperate in acts of war against their country."

On April 30 the requisitioned workmen were not released, but shut up in the railway carriages.

On May 4, 24 workmen detained in prison at Nivelles were tried at Mons, by a court-martial, "on the charge of being members of a secret society, having for its aim to thwart the carrying out of German military measures." They were condemned to imprisonment.

On May 8, 1915, 48 workmen were shut up in a goods wagon and taken to Germany.

On May 14, 45 men were deported to Germany.

On May 18 a fresh proclamation announced that the prisoners "would receive only dry bread and water, and hot food only every four days."

On May 22 three wagons with 104 workmen were sent towards Charleroi.

In spite of all, the patriotic dignity of the workmen got the better of the pressure exerted on them.

A similar course was adopted at *Malines*, where, by various methods of intimidation, the German authorities attempted to force the workers at the arsenal to work on material for the rail-

ways, as if it were not plain that this material would become war material sooner or later.

On May 30, 1915, the Governor-General announced that he "would be obliged to punish the town of Malines and its suburbs, by stopping all commercial traffic if by 10 A.M. on Wednesday, June 2, 500 workmen had not presented themselves for work at the arsenal."

On Wednesday, June 2, not a single man appeared. Accordingly, a complete stoppage took place of every vehicle within a radius of several kilometers of the town.

It was at this time that the Cardinal's journey on foot was made from Malines to Eppeghem, a journey which cost the town of Malines a fine of 20,000 marks.

Several workmen were taken by force and kept two or three days at the arsenal.

The suspension of traffic lasted ten days.

The commune of *Sweveghem* (Western Flanders) was punished in June, 1915, because the 350 workmen at the private factory of M. Bekaert refused to make barbed wire for the German army.

The following notice was placarded at *Menin* in July–August, 1915:

By order: From to-day the town will no longer afford aid of any description — including assistance to their families, wives, and children — to any operatives except those who work *regularly*

at *military work*, and other tasks assigned to them. All other operatives and their families "can henceforward not be helped in any fashion."

Can anything be more odious?

Similar measures were taken in October, 1914, at Harlebeke-lez-Courtrai, Bisseghem, Lokeren, and Mons. From Harlebeke 29 inhabitants were transported to Germany. At Mons, in M. Lenoir's factory, the directors, foremen, and 81 workmen were imprisoned for having refused to work in the service of the German army. M. Lenoir was sentenced to five years' imprisonment, the five directors to a year each, six foremen to six months, and the eighty-one workmen to eight weeks.

The General Government had recourse also to *indirect* methods of compulsion. It seized the Belgian Red Cross, confiscated its property, and changed its purpose arbitrarily. It attempted to make itself master of the public charities and to control the National Aid and Food Committee.

If we were to cite *in extenso* the decree of the Governor-General of August 4, 1915, *concerning measures intended to assure the carrying out of works of public usefulness*, and that of August 15, 1915, "*concerning the unemployed, who, through idleness, refrain from work*," it would be seen by what tortuous means the occupying Power attempts to attack at once the masters and the men.

But it is in the area of military operations that

contempt of the Hague Convention has been pushed to an extreme.

On October 12, 1915, the Official Bulletin of Orders for the district under military operations published an order containing the following striking passages:

"Article 1. Whoever, without reason, refuses to undertake or to continue work suitable to his occupation, and in the execution of which the *military administration is interested*, such work being ordered by one or more of the military commanders, will be liable to imprisonment not exceeding one year. He may also be transported to Germany.

"*Invoking Belgian laws or even international conventions to the contrary, can, in no case, justify the refusal to work.*

"On the subject of the lawfulness of the work exacted, the *military commandant has the sole right of forming a decision.*

"Article 2. Any person who by force, threats, *persuasion*, or other means attempts to influence another to refuse work as pointed out in Article 1, is liable to the punishment of imprisonment not exceeding five years.

"Article 3. Whoever knowingly *by means of aid given or in any other way* abets a punishable refusal to work, shall be liable to a maximum fine of 10,000 marks, and, in addition, may be condemned to a year's imprisonment.

"If communes or associations have rendered themselves guilty of such an offense, the heads of the communes will be punished.

"Article 4. In addition to the penalties stated in Articles 1 and 3, the German authorities may, in case of need, impose on communes, where, without reason, work has been refused, a fine or other coercive police measures.

"This present decree comes into force immediately."

Der Etappeinspekteur,
VON UNGER,
Generalleutnant

GHENT, October 12, 1915.

The injustice and arbitrariness of this decree exceed all that could be imagined. Forced labor, collective penalties, and arbitrary punishments, — all are there. It is slavery, neither more nor less.

3. *New Taxes*

We will content ourselves with pointing out, in a few words, two taxes contrary to Articles 48, 49, 51, and 52 of the Hague Convention.

The first was levied by a decree of Governor-General Baron von Bissing, on January 16, 1915. It consists in imposing on absentees an additional extraordinary tax fixed at ten times the amount of the personal tax. This tax comes into no category of existing taxes. It strikes only

at one class of citizens who have legitimately used their right of changing their place of residence before the occupation of the country. It is, then, contrary to Articles 48 and 51 of the Convention.

The second violation of the Convention is the famous contribution of 480 millions imposed on the nine provinces, December 10, 1914.

The essential condition of the legality of a contribution of this kind, according to the Hague Convention, is that it should bear *relation to the resources of the country* — Article 52.

Now, in December, 1914, Belgium was devastated. Contributions of war imposed on the towns and innumerable requisitions in kind had exhausted her. The greater part of the factories were idle, and in those which were still at work raw materials were, contrary to all law, being freely commandeered.

It was on this impoverished Belgium, living on foreign charity, that a contribution of nearly 500,000,000 frs. was imposed.

The decree of December 10, 1914, ran: "A contribution of war is imposed upon the Belgian people, amounting to forty million francs, to be paid monthly *for the period of one year.*" This "period of one year" has now passed.

But, as we write these lines, the occupying Power proposes to replace "the period of one year," by "the whole duration of the war"!

Poor little Belgium! What has she done to rich and powerful Germany, her neighbor, to be so trodden under foot, tortured, calumniated, exploited, and ground down by her?

If we had to furnish a complete statement of the decrees and acts by which, to our knowledge, the occupying Power has contravened the Hague Convention we should have to quote again *the abuse of requisitions in kind* contrary to Article 52; *the seizure* of funds belonging to private companies; the requisition of railway lines for hundreds of kilometers; the seizure of arms, deposited, by order of the Belgian Government, in the town halls — an abuse of Article 53; *the total disregard*, especially in the matter of the penal law, *of the laws in force in the country*, contrary to Article 43.

But we cannot say all here, nor quote all.

If, however, our readers wish for the proof of the accusations merely indicated in this final paragraph, we shall be glad to furnish them. There is not in our letter, nor in the four annexes, one allegation of which we have not the proof in our records.

III

MY RETURN FROM ROME

III

MY RETURN FROM ROME

FEAST OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,

IT would be impossible to express the joy I feel at being once more among you. Misfortune has brought us closer to each other. Like the early Christians, who, living under the menace of perpetual danger, were, as the Holy Scriptures tell us, "of one heart and of one soul: *Credentium erat cor unum et anima una*,"[1] — the Belgians have gathered round their Pastors; these Pastors have felt the responsibilities and the ardors of paternity growing and expanding within them; and to-day, both in invaded Belgium and in foreign lands, the sons of our soil, obeying a common impulse, ask us, more urgently than ever, to be their interpreters with God, to tell them what divine Providence demands from them and allows them to hope for. "The High Priest," says the Apostle Paul, "taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God. *Pontifex, ex homini-*

[1] *Acts* iv. 32.

bus assumptus, pro hominibus constituitur in iis, quae sunt ad Deum." [1]

I am well aware how fervently and how devoutly you prayed for us during our journey. Your petitions have been granted. My first act on my return from Rome was to go into our dear Cathedral, to address a heartfelt *Te Deum* to the Lord, and to offer an act of ardent gratitude to our Blessed Mother, "the Cause of our Joy — *Causa nostrae laetitiae*," as also the "Virgin of pain and tears — *Dolorosa et lacrymabilis Virgo Maria.*" Our Lord, indeed, has blessed our journey beyond anything that we dared to hope for.

There are many things I cannot tell you. You will understand me. The abnormal conditions, to which we have to submit, forbid us to lay bare to you all the best and most intimate things we hold in our soul for you; things which, coming from a higher source and touching you more nearly, are my most steadfast support, and would be, if I could repeat them to you, your strongest consolation; but you will not doubt my word; you will believe me when I assure you that my journey was specially blessed, and that I return to you happy, *very* happy.

Our Holy Father showed me the most touching kindness. As soon as I arrived, he deigned to fold me in his arms; he invited me to come

[1] *Hebrews* v. 1.

and see him as often as possible; he allowed me to tell him everything, to confide in him fully, to think aloud before him. During the many hours I had the consolation of spending in his august presence, he comforted, illuminated, and encouraged me paternally. He understands and shares our anxieties concerning our religious liberties and our patriotic feelings. He was good enough to sum up his profound thought on your behalf, which I received most eagerly, in the inscription traced by his own august hand beneath his portrait; I here transcribe it for you in all simplicity:

"*To our revered brother, Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Mechlin; We give the Apostolic Blessing with all our heart, assuring him that We are always with him, and that We share his grief and his anguish, inasmuch as his cause is our cause.*"

One day I went, with my heart full of gratitude, to tell the Sovereign Pontiff that he could never doubt the perfect filial piety of the Belgian people, and that we had conceived a desire to give him a fresh evidence of this in the near future. "Most Holy Father," I said, "we would like to ask our faithful congregations, throughout the country, to take part on the first Sunday in May in a general communion on behalf of your Holiness."

"*And my behalf,*" replied the Holy Father immediately, "*is that of Belgium.*"

Encouraged by this reception of my plan, I wrote to the Cardinals of Paris, London, Armagh in Ireland, and Italy, and I am confident that on the first Sunday in May a common Eucharistic prayer will go up to Heaven from all the countries of our Allies; presented to God by the august hands of the Head of the Catholic Church, this prayer will hasten the glorious restoration of our beloved Belgium. On that day the Holy Father gives all parish priests throughout the country power to bestow the Papal benediction on their flock, with plenary indulgence for the souls of soldiers who have fallen on the field of honor.

You have already, I believe, heard echoes of the acclamations with which the name of Belgium was greeted throughout our journey to Switzerland and Italy, and on our way back.

Even supposing, my beloved brethren, that the final issue of the gigantic duel at present being fought in Europe and Asia Minor is uncertain, the moral triumph of Belgium is an ever memorable fact for history and civilization. In concert with your King and your Government, you agreed to an immense sacrifice in the interests of your fatherland. Out of respect for our plighted word; to proclaim that in your consciences, right comes before all else, you have sacrificed your good, your homes, your sons, your husbands; and after eighteen months of coercion,

you are still proud of your deed, as on the first day. Heroism seems so natural to you that it does not occur to you to glory in it on your own account; but if you had been able to do as we have done, to pass beyond our frontiers, and look at our Belgian fatherland from without; if you could have heard the voices of the people, "the man in the street," as the English say, I mean the manual laborer, the humble *employe*, the women of the working classes; if you had received the homage, written or spoken, of those who are the authorized representatives of the great social forces, politics, the press, science, art, diplomacy, and religion; you would have realized more fully the magnanimity of your attitude, and your souls would have leaped with joy and, even, I think, with pride.

The most fervid expressions of respect, of admiration, of reverence for the moral greatness, the nobility of soul, the calm tenacious patience of the Belgian nation reached us from the cities and villages of Switzerland, Italy, Spain, France, and England, and went up, borne by enthusiasm, to those who personify Belgian patriotism, our Sovereigns, the Government, the Clergy, our valiant army.

As to us, all the homage we received we referred to you, for a secret instinct always reminded us that it was you who deserved it and attracted it by your endurance.

In our hours of meditation we blessed Providence for the progress it has brought about in public opinion.

You will remember how, some fifteen months ago, we told you: Certain highly placed men, who ought to have taken a loftier view of events, sometimes went so far as to say: But after all, was it necessary for Belgium to sacrifice herself thus in defense of her territory? Would not a verbal protest have sufficed, and would this not have saved her from the ravages that have brought her to the verge of ruin? This language, I told you, had roused my indignation, and more than once I had given free utterance to that indignation under the stimulus of internal revolt.

Well! I never hear this language on any lips now.

Therefore the moral level of neutral, or formerly neutral nations, is higher. They understand the spirit of sacrifice, they do homage to it, they appreciate it in you, they admire you. Your generation has made a glorious entrance into history.

Is not this a conquest, my Brethren, and, in the sense in which moral advantage is more highly esteemed than material advantage, are you not the most glorious conquerors?

I cannot refrain from applying to our present situation the words of our Lord in the Gospel: "What shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" [1]

[1] *Matthew* xvi. 26.

Oh, yes! you weep, I know; there is mourning on every hand; the hearts of mothers, wives, and betrothed maidens are wrung; lives are lost on the banks of the Yser; the captivity of the nation on its own soil is painfully prolonged; our finances are involved, our trade and our manufactures are at a standstill; I know all this, and you know me well enough, I think, to rest assured that I suffer because of them with you, and because you are suffering. But, after all, what are these sufferings of a day in face of the eternity in which we shall all sooner or later live our true lives? What, finally, is the value of an earthly success which we should have to buy at the price of our eternal happiness? What, on the other hand, is a momentary sorrow, an ephemeral desolation, a, humanly speaking, premature death, when we have the provision of an endless and unclouded happiness for those Christian families who, having lived together as Christians here below, and having nerved themselves with Christian courage to self-sacrifice, will soon be reunited forever in the bosom of our Father which is in Heaven?

One day when I was making my way towards the Church of St. Paul-without-the-Walls, accomplishing on your behalf the pilgrimage I had promised you before my departure that I would undertake, I visited the basilica of St. Sebastian, and found it full of fragments, due

to the excavations there in progress. The archæologists who were directing the work had brought various inscriptions to light. One of these struck me particularly, and I brought it away in my memory for you. It said: "*Et nos in Deo omnes. — And as to us, let us all hold together in God.*"

Let us take this as the motto of our hopes; let it perfectly sustain our courage. "*Et nos in Deo omnes. All together in God.*"

The day will come when we shall weep no more, when we shall no longer be scattered, when our families will be reunited never to be parted again. Let us think more of Heaven than of earth. Let us live there in spirit; as St. Paul said to the Philippians: "For our conversation is in Heaven: *Nostra autem conversatio in coelis est.*" [1]

The Christian is a traveler, whose home is in Heaven.

You must remember that I have never concealed my forebodings from you. I have preached patriotism to you, because it is an offshoot of the greatest of Christian virtues, Charity. But from the first I warned you, that in my humble opinion, our trial would be a long one, and that success would be the guerdon of the nations who could endure most bravely.

My conviction, both natural and supernatural, of our ultimate victory is more firmly rooted in

[1] *Philippians* iii. 20.

my soul than ever. If, indeed, it could have been shaken, the assurances given me by several disinterested and careful observers of the general situation, notably those belonging to the two Americas, would have sufficed to consolidate it.

We shall triumph, do not doubt it, but we are not yet at the end of our sufferings.

France, England, and Russia have engaged not to conclude peace until the independence of Belgium is completely restored and an ample indemnity has been made to her. Italy, in her turn, has given her adhesion to the London compact.

Our future is not doubtful.

But we must prepare it.

We shall prepare it by cultivating the virtue of patience and the spirit of self-sacrifice. "Be of good courage," says the Psalmist, "and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord. *Viriliter agite, et confortetur cor vestrum, omnes qui speratis in Domino.*" [1]

Put your trust absolutely in Providence; it watches over those who reverence the Kingdom of God and of Justice. Whatever happens, never doubt of Justice. At no other period of my life have I seen its action penetrating, to all appearance, the most trivial circumstances, the most insignificant incidents, the events most foreign to our personal calculations, as in this recent

[1] *Psalm* xxxi. 24.

journey of mine. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God," said St. Paul. "*Scimus autem quoniam diligentibus Deum omnia co-operantur in bonum.*" [1]

Are we not all and always, more than the lilies of the field, and the young bird that flutters in the branches, in the hand of the Most High? Draw your plans, set up your batteries, arrange your movements, but still man will propose and God will dispose.

"There is no king saved by the multitude of an host," says the Psalmist; "a horse is a vain thing for safety, neither shall he deliver any by his great strength. . . . Our soul waiteth for the Lord; He is our help and our shield." [2]

Imagine a belligerent nation, sure of its army corps, its munitions, its commanders, with every prospect of gaining a victory. If God should allow the germs of an epidemic to spread among the ranks, all optimistic previsions would at once be brought to naught.

Therefore, above all things, put your trust in God. Invoke His favor by purifying your consciences. Cleanse your homes. Let purity, modesty, and Christian simplicity reign there. Prepare in contrition for the performance of your Easter duties. Do not isolate yourselves in the Church. You are in her maternal breast;

[1] *Romans* viii. 28.
[2] *Psalm* xxxviii. 16–20.

live in her spirit. Lent is the season when the Church awaits in prayerful lamentation, in privation and suffering, reconciliation with her prodigal children, the birth of catechumens to divine life. Lament, pray, deny yourselves, suffer with your Mother.

As a general measure, we have thought it well to give you dispensation from the rules of fasting and abstinence, save on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, but if you do not feel the need for them, do not take advantage of all the dispensations; impose certain voluntary supererogatory mortifications upon yourselves. Apply yourselves to meditation; watch over your senses and the inclinations of your hearts, that your souls may freely soar to Him who is your sole Good, and who alone can give you peace, that is, serenity with order.

Pray, pray confidently, pray perseveringly. Pray at night with your families. Attend the Sunday Offices, Mass, Vespers, and Benediction.

Above all, my beloved Brethren, attend the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass whenever you have time, and participate in it by Holy Communion. At present many of you are less strenuously occupied than formerly, and are freer to dispose of your time. Could you not, by exerting your good will, spend half an hour at the foot of the altar, in a union of your souls with our Lord Jesus Christ, not only on Sundays, but daily,

praying for our country, for our heroes on the Yser, living or dead, for those who are suffering and dying? He is there, our Divine Lord; He comes to remind us that He was preëminently the Man of Sorrows, acquainted with grief: *virum dolorum et scientem infirmitatum;* [1] but He is risen. He is in the triumph of His glory at the right hand of the Eternal Father; and if He deigns to dwell among us, and to give Himself for our food in the Holy Eucharist, it is that He may fill us with His life, and help us to tread the path of suffering with Him, that so we may follow Him into the joy of the everlasting tabernacles. Courage, my Brethren; listen to my exhortations; attend Mass daily, take your missal with you, follow the priest closely in it, partake with him of the Eucharistic feast, and you will soon perceive that your life is being transformed, and that our Divine Jesus does not deceive us when He says: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. *Venite ad me omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis et ego reficiam vos.*" [2]

Let us more especially invoke St. Joseph during this month of March, which popular piety dedicates to him. Let us celebrate his festival. Let us commend our families to him and confide our soldiers to his care.

[1] *Isaias* liii. 3.
[2] *Matthew* xi. 29.

As we write this conclusion, the newspapers bring us a summary of a letter addressed by the Sovereign Pontiff to the Cardinal Vicar, in which His Holiness expresses a dual wish, to which we hasten to respond.

The Holy Father implores Divine Mercy to put an end to the conflict which is steeping Europe in blood. During Lent we desire priests to replace the Collect *pro tempore belli* by the Collect *pro pace.*

The Holy Father further asks that, on Good Friday, all mourning mothers and wives should stand with the Mother of Jesus at the foot of the Cross and unite their sacrifice with the blood-stained Sacrifice of the Redemption. We will all associate ourselves with the ideas of His Holiness. Belgium has already been dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to St. Joseph. On Good Friday we will dedicate ourselves to the sorrowful and immaculate Heart of Mary. We delight in honoring the Immaculate Conception of the Holy Virgin, and this is well; but together with this privilege, freely conferred by God on her who was to be His Mother, let us remember the title Mary *acquired* by her sufferings to our gratitude. Pierced by the sword of spiritual martyrdom, the Heart of Mary voluntarily associated its *Compassion* with the Immolation of the Divine Victim of Calvary, for the redemption of our souls.

The evil hours we are experiencing urge us to have recourse more especially to the Meditation of our Lady of Sorrows.

Therefore, in response to the ardent wish which has been expressed to me, I will, during the office of Good Friday, consecrate in the depths of my soul, my diocese, and as far as lies in my power, our dear country to the *sorrowful and immaculate Heart of Mary*. I exhort our priests to unite with me in this intention, and the faithful to repeat devoutly the following invocation, to which I have already, on a former occasion, attached an indulgence of 100 days: *Sorrowful and immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us*, who ask thy help.

D. J. Card. Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

IV

FOR OUR SOLDIERS

IV

FOR OUR SOLDIERS

Address given by His Eminence Cardinal Mercier on the day of the National Fête, July 21, 1916, *at Sainte Gudule, Brussels.*

"Jerusalem was made an habitation of strangers;
her festival days were turned into mourning."
I Machabees, i. 40, 41.

Beloved Brethren,

WE ought to have met together here to celebrate the eighty-fifth anniversary of our national independence.

To-day, in fourteen years' time, our restored cathedrals and our rebuilt churches will be thrown widely open; the crowds will surge in; our King Albert, standing on this throne, will bow his unconquered head before the King of Kings; the Queen and the Royal Princes will surround him; we shall hear again the joyous peals of our bells, and throughout the whole country, under the vaulted arches of our churches, Belgians, hand in hand, will renew their vows to their God, their Sovereign, and their liberty, while the bishops and the priests, interpreters of the soul of the nation, will intone a triumphant

Te Deum in a common transport of joyous thanksgiving.

To-day the hymn of joy dies on our lips.

The Jewish people in captivity at Babylon, sitting in tears on the banks of the Euphrates, watched the waters of the river flow by. Their dumb harps were hung on the willows by the bank. Who amongst them would have the courage to sing the song of Jehovah in a strange land? "O Jerusalem," cried the Psalmist, "if ever I forget thee, let my right hand wither, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember thee; if thou art no longer the beginning of my joys."

The Psalm ends in imprecations, but we do not allow ourselves to repeat them; we are not of the Old Testament, tolerating the laws of retaliation: "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." Our lips, purified by the fire of Christian charity, utter no words of hate.

To hate is to make it one's object to do harm to others and to delight in so doing. Whatever may be our sufferings, we must not wish to show hatred towards those who have inflicted them. Our national unity is joined with a feeling of universal brotherhood. But even this feeling of universal brotherhood is dominated by our respect for unconditional justice, without which no relationship is possible, either between individuals or between nations.

And that is why, with St. Thomas Aquinas, the most authoritative teacher of Christian Theology, we proclaim that public retribution is commendable.

Crimes, violation of justice, outrage on the public peace, whether enacted by an individual or by a group, must be repressed. Men's minds are stirred up, tortured, uneasy, as long as the guilty one is not put back in his place, as the strong, healthy, colloquial expression has it. To put men and things back in their places is to re-establish order, readjust the balance, and restore peace on a just basis.

Public retribution in this sense may distress the affected sentimentality of a weak nature; all the same, it is, says St. Thomas, the expression and the decree of the highest, the purest form of charity, and of the zeal which is its flame. It does not make a target of suffering, but a weapon wherewith to avenge outraged justice.

How can one love order without hating disorder; intelligently wish for peace without expelling that which is destroying it; love a brother, that is to say wish him well, without desiring that willingly, or by force, his will shall bend before the unalterable edicts of justice and truth?

It is from these heights that one must view the war in order to understand the greatness of its extent.

Once more, perhaps, you will find yourself

face to face with effeminate natures for whom the war means nothing beyond explosions of mines, bursting of shells, massacres of men, spilling of blood, piling up of corpses. You will meet politicians of narrow vision who see no further stake in a battle beyond the interest of one day, the taking of so much ground, of a stretch of country, or of a province.

But no. If, in spite of its horrors, war, I mean a just war, has so much austere beauty, it is because war brings out the disinterested enthusiasm of a whole people, which gives, or is prepared to give, its most precious possession, even life itself, for the defense and the vindication of things which cannot be weighed, which cannot be calculated, but which can never be swallowed up: Justice, Honor, Peace, Liberty!

Do you not feel that, in these two years, the war, the ardent unflagging interest which you give to it, purifies you, separates your higher nature from the dross, draws you away to uplift you towards something nobler and better than yourselves?

You are rising towards the ideals of justice and honor. They support you and draw you upwards.

And, because this ideal, if it is not a vain abstraction, which evaporates like the phantasies of a dream, must have its foundation in a living subject, I am never tired of maintaining this truth, which holds us all under its yoke. God

reveals Himself as the Master, the Director of events, and of our wills, the holy Master of the universal conscience.

Ah, if we could clasp in our arms our heroes who are fighting for us over there, or are awaiting anxiously in the trenches their turn to go under fire; if we could take them by surprise, and feel the beatings of their hearts, would not each one of them say to us: I am doing my duty, I am sacrificing myself on the altar of justice?

And you, wives and mothers, tell us in your turn of the beauty of these tragic years; wives, whose every thought goes, sad, but resigned, towards the absent one, bringing him your hopes, your long expectation, your prayers. Mothers, whose divided existence is consumed in unceasing anguish, you have given your sons, and you will not take them back; we stand breathless with unceasing admiration before you.

The head of one of our noblest families wrote to me: "Our son in the 7th Line Regiment has fallen; my wife and I are broken-hearted; and yet, if it had to be, we would give him again."

One of the curates of the capital has been condemned to twelve years' penal servitude. I was allowed to go into his cell to embrace and to bless him. "I have three brothers at the front," he said, "and I think I am here chiefly because I helped the youngest — he is only seventeen — to rejoin the elder ones; one of my sisters is in a

neighboring cell, but, thank God, my mother is not left alone; indeed she has sent us a message to say so; she does not weep."

Is it not true that our mothers make us think of the mother of the Machabees?

What lessons of moral greatness there are to be learned here around us, and in exile and in the prisons, and in the concentration camps, in Holland and in Germany!

Do we think enough of what those brave men must be suffering, who since the beginning of the war, on the morrow of the defense of Liège and Namur, and the retreat from Antwerp, saw their military career shattered, and chafe and fret, these guardians of our rights, and of our communal liberties, whose valor has reduced them to inaction?

It needs courage to throw one's self forward, but it needs no less to hold one's self back. Sometimes it is more noble to suffer in silence than to act.

And what of these two years of calm submission by the Belgian people before the inevitable; this unshakable tenacity, which moved a humble woman, before whom the possibilities of an approaching conclusion of peace were being discussed, to say: "Oh, as for us, we must not worry; we can go on waiting." How beautiful is all this, and how full of instruction for the generations to come!

This is what you must look at, my brothers, the greatness of the nation in her sacrifice; our universal and enduring brotherhood in anguish and in mourning, and in the same unconquerable hope; this is what you must look at to appraise your Belgian fatherland at its true value.

Now the first exponents of this moral greatness are our soldiers.

Until that day when they return to us, and when grateful Belgium acclaims the living, and places a halo of glory about the memory of her dead, let us build up for them in our hearts a permanent monument of sacred gratitude.

Let us pray for those who are no more. Let us exclude no one from our commiseration; the blood of Christ was shed for all. Some of them are atoning in Purgatory for the last remnants of their human weakness. It is for you to hasten their entry into Paradise. Succor the poor in distress, both the poor who are known to you and those who are ashamed to beg. Give of your abundance to those who are in need of the necessities of life. Be present at the Mass, which is celebrated every week in your parish churches for our dead soldiers; take your children with you, encourage them to communicate, and communicate with them.

Let us also pray for those who are still holding the firing line on the field of battle. Remember that, even at this moment, while I am speaking

to you, some of them are in the agony of death. The prospect of eternity stretches out before them. Let us think of them, let us mortify ourselves for them, resign ourselves to God for them, and obtain for them a holy death.

"Our soldiers are our masters," wrote a French Academician yesterday; "they are our leaders, our teachers, our judges, our supporters, our true friends; let us be worthy of them, let us imitate them, so that we may not do less than our duty; they are always ready to do more than their own."

The hour of deliverance approaches, but it has not yet struck. Let us be patient. Let us not suffer our courage to waver. Let us surrender to Divine Providence the work of making perfect our national probation.

Young women, young girls, let me ask if you are thinking seriously enough about the gravity of this present time? I entreat you not to turn aside from the mourning of your country. There are attitudes, there are ways of behaving which are an insult to grief.

For you modesty is at all times a virtue and a halo of glory; but to-day it is in addition a patriotic duty.

You, also, must think of the privations and of the endurance of our soldiers.

Let us all try to adopt the great principle of austerity in our lives.

"How much," continues the patriot whom I have just quoted, "how much ought we, in the relatively easy conditions and the less exposed districts, which are ours, and which do not deserve the name of fire zones, to endeavor to reduce and simplify our needs, and like the soldiers, though in our own sphere, to show more concentrated energy. Let us not allow ourselves a moment's distraction or relaxation. Let us devote every minute in our lives to the magnificent cause for which our brothers are so devotedly sacrificing theirs.

"And, just as our heroes at the front show us a wonderful and consoling spectacle of indissoluble unity, of a brotherhood in arms which nothing can destroy, even so, in our ranks, less compact and well disciplined though they may be, we shall earnestly strive to maintain the same patriotic sense of union. We will respect the truce imposed on our quarrels by the one great Cause which alone ought to use and absorb all our powers of attack and combat; and if there are any godless or unfortunate people, who fail to understand the urgency and the beauty of this national precept, and insist, in spite of all, on keeping alive and fomenting the passions which divide us when other matters are concerned, we will turn aside our heads, and continue, without answering them, to remain faithful to the pact of fellowship, of friendship, of loyal and true con-

fidence which we have concluded with them, even in spite of themselves, under the great inspiration of the war."

The approaching date of the first centenary of our independence ought to find us stronger, more intrepid, more united than ever. Let us prepare ourselves for it with work, with patience and in true brotherhood.

When, in 1930, we recall the dark years of 1915–1916, they will appear to us as the brightest, the most majestic and, if, from to-day, we resolve that they shall be so, the happiest and the most fruitful in our national history. *Per crucem ad lucem* — from the sacrifice flashes forth the light!

V

THE VOICE OF GOD

V

THE VOICE OF GOD

FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH OF THE HOLY ROSARY, 1916

Introduction

The Trial is long

YES, the trial is long. (I hear you repeat this from day to day, and I think there can be none who do not share your feeling.)

And when will it end?

One day when our divine Saviour had been speaking to His Apostles of the calamities which will herald the approaching end of the world — wars, pestilence, famine, earthquakes, atmospheric disturbances — His hearers asked Him: "When shall these things be?"

And our divine Redeemer answered: "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man . . . not even the Son of Man";[1] in other words, it did not enter into the earthly mission of the Son of God to reveal it to humanity. The great thing for you is, indeed, not to know whether the world

[1] *Matthew* xxiv. 3; *Mark* xiii. 32.

will last a thousand years, ten thousand years, or ten million years longer; it signifies not whether you die in youth, in maturity, or in extreme old age; one thing alone is of consequence, that you save your souls, and that you be docile instruments in the almighty hands of the Master of events, for the sanctification of His Holy Name, the establishment of His Kingdom, and the fulfillment of His Will.

Part I

The soul must contemplate Eternity in silence, if it would grasp the deep significance of events.

God speaks to us from without and from within.

He speaks to us from without by the marvels of Nature and the lessons of events.

He speaks to us from within by the gentle breath of the graces of His Holy Spirit.

The voice of Nature is generally harmonious and peaceful, as in the solemn progress of the sun through space, the murmur of the waters, the growth of corn, the slow evolution of the seasons. But at times it is violent and terrible, as in thunder and the thunderbolt, the fury of the tempest, the shocks that make the earth tremble, and cast out the lava of volcanoes upon it.

The world of history has also its peaceful ex-

pansions, its periods of concentrated labor, of economic, intellectual, artistic, and civilizing success; but at times, passions run riot, hate stifles the voice of love, death seems to triumph over life.

Nevertheless, the God of grace is still speaking to us.

Each historic period is a page in the divine book of Providence.

We write it, but the Will of the Almighty, strong yet gentle, holds the pen.

It depends upon us whether we write in characters of gold or letters of blood, but the book must be written. We shall find this book again in eternity, and it will then be manifest to all to what extent, and how, each one of us has collaborated in it.

As long as history lasts, the book remains closed and sealed; the divine Lamb, who shed His blood for our redemption, alone has power to break the seven seals which guard its secrets. The Elders of the Apocalypse, prostrate before the Lamb, offer Him the prayers of the Saints, and sing: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; because Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God in Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us to our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth. *Dignus es, Domine, accipere librum, et aperire*

signacula ejus; quoniam occisus es, et redemisti nos Deo in sanguine tuo ex omni tribu, et lingua, et populo, et natione; et fecisti nos Deo nostro regnum, et sacerdotes." [1]

The last seal will be broken when the divine Jesus who has deigned to abase Himself to us, and to take on our frail humanity, that He might sacrifice it for us, shall come back to us in the majesty of His glory, seated on the clouds, the cross of the Last Judgment in His hand, and shall say in a voice infinitely more mighty than the thunder to each of His creatures one or the other of these two things: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you," or: "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

These will be the last resounding words that will fall from the lips of the Man-God; decisive, irrevocable words, which will range us for all eternity on the right or on the left, among the elect in glory, or among the reprobate in hell.

My beloved Brethren, do you think of this? Do you think of it enough?

In the presence of this supreme alternative, what does all the rest matter?

What does it matter whether you die young or old, in bed or on the battle-field, far from those belonging to you, or near to them?

What in the last resort will it matter to you

[1] *Apocalypse* v. 9, 10.

whether your days have been passed happily, in a much loved home, in comfort and abundance, surrounded by affection and esteem, or whether you have lived in affliction, in solitude, perhaps in poverty, bowed down by suspicion, humiliation, and oppression? How will you look upon and judge these trifles, when you contemplate them from eternity?

Whatever may betide you, there is something in you which no person and no event can touch; this is your soul. And this soul, which belongs to you, and is yours, of which you are the master, was made to enjoy God, and will enjoy God, if that is your desire; it will embrace Him and be embraced by Him, not for the brief space of a man's life, or of an historic period, but eternally, for ever and ever.

So, Brethren, lift up your eyes, I beseech you, and keep them fixed upon this polar star of your eternity.

Then you will see created events fading into the penumbra of nullity which the Scriptures, that other direct and personal voice of God, call alternately a vapor which steals away and disappears, a cloud which dissolves, a shadow which flees, a flower which withers, a wave which melts again into the ocean.

Eternity! My Brethren, we all lack courage to look at it steadily, were it but for once. Lay hold of it as closely as you can; keep it fixed in

your imagination for an hour, a half hour, a quarter of an hour; concentrate your thoughts on it; during this quarter of an hour see only this, and in it God, the God that was made Man, your Creator, your Savior and your Judge; you, confronting it, made for it, determine to forget all else, for this short space of time; and you will rise enlightened, tempered, fortified.

At the beginning of this address, my Brethren, I told you that God speaks to us from within and from without by the voice of Nature or of history; from within by the gentle breath of the graces of His Holy Spirit.

Would you know why it is that Eternity, which is of such vast importance, touches you so little, whereas events which Time carries away absorb you so deeply?

It is because you find time for everything, but that you will not spare any for the one thing which is worth while. You are not able to collect your thoughts and listen. Your soul has been made the temple of the Holy Ghost by baptism and confirmation; let it, as St. John says, receive the anointing of grace, and it will learn to distinguish truth from falsehood.[1] But, observes St. Gregory the Pope, Grace is like the breeze of dawn; it caresses, and is gone; unquiet spirits cannot hold it.[2]

[1] *I John* ii. 27.
[2] "Moral." Lib. v. cap. 26.

You are at the mercy of events, whereas you ought to dominate them. You obey your emotions, whereas it is your duty, and within your power, to control them. Reduce them to silence, kneel down in your room with closed doors, *clauso ostio*,[1] or in the sanctuary where our divine Savior dwells for us, in front of the altar of the Holy Sacrifice, in front of the tabernacle, in front of the crucifix, and there in silence, withdrawing from all that is happening without and all that is stirring within, ask our Lord to send you His Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit is the forefinger of the Father's right hand, *digitus Paternae dexterae;* He will point out the way in which your conscience shall find truth, light, and peace, in all your hours of grief and anguish.

Part II

Our Lord Jesus Christ gives us the key to events in the mystery of His Death and Resurrection, perpetuated in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Life springs from death.

The peace of humanity ought not to be broken by wars. In the original scheme of Providence the passions were in subjection to reason, and ought never to have interfered with the concord either of families or of nations. But sin overthrew

[1] *Matthew* vi. 6.

this generous plan, and after sin, disorder made its appearance in history. Henceforth revolt became an element in events. Pride and greed broke down equilibrium; repression, defense by force of arms, are necessary for its reëstablishment. Wars have become inevitable, and as long as there are upon the earth men guilty of allowing their passions to dominate their reason, and their reason to set itself above the divine will, universal pacifism will be a dream. Nay, more than this: to desire peace for its own sake, peace at any price, would be to accept with equal indifference justice and injustice, truth and falsehood; it would be an act of cowardice, an impiety.

Nevertheless, a great artist is able to resolve discords into harmonies. Under the brush of a master of genius, the ugly, by force of contrast, becomes surpassing beauty.

Thus divine Providence, which designed naught but good, found means, in the secrets of its infinite wisdom, to transform this world of ours, disturbed and disfigured by the sin of our first parents and our individual crimes, into a work of redemption, surpassing the sketch of its primitive design in grandeur and moral perfection. "God, Who is almighty and supremely good," says St. Augustine, "would not have allowed the smallest taint of evil to have crept into His work, had He not been at once good enough and powerful enough to evolve good even from evil.

Neque Deus omnipotens, rerum cui summa potestas, cum summe bonus sit, ullo modo sineret mali aliquid esse in operibus suis, nisi usque adeo esset omnipotens et bonus, ut bene faceret et de malo." [1] And you remember, my Brethren, that every year on Easter Eve when the Resurrection of Christ is proclaimed, the Church makes bold to sing: "O yes, Adam's sin, which Christ has taken away, was indeed necessary! O happy fault, which procured us such a mighty Redeemer! *O certe necessarium Adae peccatum, quod Christi morte deletum est! O felix culpa, quae talem ac tantum meruit habere Redemptorem!*"

The terrible events we have been witnessing for the last two years are the result of human passions we must deplore and execrate; but it is for us to raise ourselves, by reflection and faith, to a higher and serener conception of the general plan of Providence, and to apply to our affliction and the crimes which occasioned it what our liturgy says of the drama which was at once the darkest of crimes and the cruellest of agonies: "Lord God," it says in the canon of the Mass, "in memory of the blessed Passion of Christ Thy Son, our Lord, and of His glorious Resurrection and Ascension, we offer to Thy Sovereign Majesty this Holy Victim, this bread of life and this cup of immortality."

Yes, in spite of its horrors, blessed was the

[1] "S. Aug. Enchiridion," Cap. xi.

Passion of our divine Saviour. Blessed for Him, for it earned Him His glorious Resurrection and Ascension, and His sovereignty of the world. Blessed for us, for henceforth, if we are willing to suffer with Him, we shall also be glorified with Him: "*Si tamen compatimur, ut et conglorificemur.*"[1] A moment of affliction now, as St. Paul says to the Corinthians, and above, for our reward, an "eternal and exceeding weight of glory," provided that "we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. *Id enim, quod in praesenti est momentaneum et leve tribulationis nostrae, supra modum in sublimitate aeternum gloriae pondus operatur in nobis, non contemplantibus nobis quae videntur, sed quae non videntur. Quae enim videntur temporalia sunt, quae autem non videntur, aeterna sunt.*"[2]

Such, my Brethren, in brief, is the fundamental solution of the essential problems of life for individuals and for nations: the Passion before the Resurrection, death to attain life, the Cross to enter into glory.

Under the ancient covenant, God spoke to His chosen people by the medium of the Prophets. Under the new covenant, says St. Paul, He speaks to us directly by His Son, who, when He had

[1] *Romans* viii. 17.
[2] *II Corinthians* iv. 17, 18.

purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.[1]

The prophets, Isaias, Jeremias, Ezechiel, Daniel, Nahum, Habacuc, and the rest, were commissioned to recall the chosen people and their oppressors, the Egyptians, Assyrians, Chaldaeans and Babylonians, to the law of duty; they proclaimed to them invariably that in blood and ruins they would find at once their chastisement and the principle of their regeneration. God chastens us only to heal and save us. Guilty humanity must die to live again. Until the grain of wheat dies in the earth, there is no hope of life and fruitfulness. "Follow this rule," says St. Paul again; "look only to the Cross for your regeneration in Christ Jesus, and you shall find pardon and peace, you and all the true sons of Israel. *Mihi autem absit gloriari, nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi. . . . In Christo enim Jesu, nihil valet (nisi) nova creatura. Et quicumque hanc regulam secuti fuerint, pax super illos, et misericordia, et super Israel Dei.*"[2]

In so far as the Belgian people can accept these austere principles, in so far will it be able to take the two tragic years it has passed through as an incentive to a more vigorous future, a renewal of energy, a more ardent confidence in the illimitable resources of a Christian nation.

[1] *Hebrews* i. 2, 3.
[2] *Galatians* vi. 14–16.

At this most intimate moment of the Mass, when the priest and the faithful are about to feed upon Christ, what is the prayer the Church puts upon our lips? Once again she reminds us of the starting point and the term of life. Here, she says, the Eternal Father, with the coöperation of the Holy Spirit, realizes His design of making the life-spring that is to nourish the world come forth from the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. "*Domine Jesu Christe, Fili Dei vivi, qui ex voluntate Patris, co-operante Spiritu Sancto, per mortem tuam, mundum vivificasti. . . .*"

And have not the Holy Fathers, Popes Pius IX and Pius X, asked us to repeat each day after Mass this touching prayer: "I intreat Thee, O sweet Savior Jesus Christ, that Thy death may be to me a source of unfailing life, and that Thy Cross may be my glory forever. *Mors tua sit mihi vita indeficiens, crux tua sit mihi gloria sempiterna.*" [1]

Part III

Take an active part in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; worship the purposes of God therein; and further, expiate, give thanks, and pray.

Come to Mass, my Brethren, to revive your religious life. Come every day, if you can, but at least never miss the obligatory Sunday Mass.

[1] Pius, P.P. X, Aug. 29, 1912.

I have of late encountered youths and maidens of the people, who would no longer venture to show themselves in church, because they have nothing but sabots to put on their feet. My children, I understand and sympathize with your humiliation. But believe that our divine Redeemer is not like the parvenus whose glances you dread. He became poor of His own free will, to draw you to Him more closely; the nearer you are to destitution, the more you resemble Him, and the more He loves you.

Oh! my Brethren, honor the poor. And you, my dear colleagues of the priesthood, give them the first place in your esteem and solicitude. I should wish to see them in the front rank in the temple of Jesus of Bethlehem and Nazareth. Before God and before His Church, they are greater and worthier than you and I. If they accept their condition cheerfully and with faith, they do more for the salvation of humanity than those whose wealth and success sometimes dazzle you.

As to you, Ladies, if you flaunt your abundance when your sisters have only wooden shoes and shabby garments, know that you will be offending against God, your country, and the dignity of the poor.

Come then, one and all, to Mass. Come modestly attired. You need not blush to come, however poor your garments, if they are clean.

Come mainly for the primary intention of the sacrifice, that of worshipping God. To worship God is to proclaim that God is God, that He is the Master to whom you owe obedience, that all He does is well done. Unite with the priest at the altar, not only in repeating prayers more or less similar to his; but also in the sacerdotal act. For you too are priests. You have heard how the Apostle St. John tells you in the Apocalypse that the blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ has made you all kings and priests; priests of God and of Christ, he says elsewhere.[1] St. Peter expresses the same thought: Christ is the living stone upon which the whole Church is built, he says: "Ye also, as living stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. *Et ipsi tamquam lapides vivi super-aedificamini, domus spiritualis, sacerdotium sanctum, offerre spirituales hostias, acceptabiles Deo per Jesum Christum.*" [2]

To the priest officially intrusted with public ministry in the Church, the bishop gives the following admonition: "Understand what you are doing; seek inspiration in your acts, from the mystery you touch with your hands; and since at the altar you renew the mystery of the Death of our Lord, mortify also in your members your

[1] *Apocalypse* xx. 6.
[2] *I Peter* ii. 5.

vicious instincts and evil desires. *Agnoscite quod agitis; imitamini quod tractatis; quatenus mortis Dominicae mysterium celebrantes, mortificare membra vestra a vitiis et concupiscentiis omnibus procuretis.*" [1]

And since you are priests, that is to say, sacrificers, be, moreover, yourselves the victims. "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God," writes St. Paul to the Romans, "present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. *Obsecro itaque vos fratres, per misericordiam Dei, ut exhibeatis corpora vestra hostiam viventem, sanctam, Deo placentem, rationabile obsequium vestrum.*" [2]

Make your individual sufferings and your national sufferings, as well as every act of your life, the material of your sacrifice.

And this is not enough. Sacrifice your life itself in anticipation as a free-will offering to the glory of God. Death is but a violent rupture which we must inevitably undergo; it is an act with which the Christian soul should associate itself actively, the restitution to the sovereign Master of a possession He has confided to us for His glory; this restitution is a sacerdotal act which the Christian accomplishes in union with the supreme dissolution of our Lord Jesus Christ. And when all of us, familiarizing ourselves with

[1] Pont. Rom. de Ord. Presbyteri.
[2] *Romans* xii. 1.

this Christian and ennobling conception of death, shall, in concert with our sons and brothers who fall on the field of honor, offer this spiritual sacrifice of our earthly lives, a magnificent homage will rise from the soil of our Belgian fatherland to the throne of divine Majesty, and will come down to us again in blessings. Our sacrifice will be an act of worship and of expiation. During these two months, of the Holy Rosary, and of the Dead, in union with the sorrowful and immaculate heart of Mary, kneel diligently in prayer at the Calvary, be assiduous in your attendance at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, asking pardon for the living, and mercy for the souls of our beloved dead.

Also, show gratitude to God. Bless Him for having preserved to our affection our King, the pride of the Belgian nation; our strong and gentle Queen, and the royal children; thank Him for having given us patience to endure, without flinching or murmuring, our long, hard ordeal; for having granted us the first benediction of our Holy Father Pope Benedict XV, and for having inspired him to say that his warmest paternal feeling is for Belgium, for having filled the hearts of foreign nations with respect for our misfortunes. After the war we ought to raise a monument of gratitude to them; let us even now give them a place of honor in our grateful piety.

Finally, until we have reached the end of our

Calvary, let our participation in the Mass be a constant prayer for our beloved country, for those present and those absent, our brave prisoners and interned compatriots, our dear refugees.

The longer the war lasts, the more ardent does my pity become for all those energetic men who were eager to spend themselves on our behalf, and who are now tortured by their inaction.

Our refugees! England, France, Holland, and Switzerland leave nothing undone to alleviate their lot, but exile is exile, none the less. We sometimes hear bitter things said of them. I do not deny that there may have been among them certain weaknesses, perhaps remembered with sorrow now by those who yielded to them; but how many among those you judge hastily, reluctantly obey some delicate sentiment of deference, of filial or paternal affection, of devotion to a sick person, of solicitude for a son at the front, of material necessity. According to those who are in close contact with them, our absent ones rival their compatriots in occupied Belgium in patience, self-denial, and apostolic spirit. We shall receive them with open arms when they return to us, and they must not doubt that they will find here friends and brothers who will have invariably remained faithful to them.

We cannot exclude any from our prayers, even our enemies; but Christian theology teaches us to graduate our affections. Give your best affec-

tion, says St. Thomas Aquinas, to your relatives, your compatriots, those who do good to you.[1]

Pray then above all for our dear soldiers, who are so close to our hearts by the ties of blood, perhaps, by patriotism, by their devotion to us. Associate with them their wives and mothers, those silent heroines of the great European drama. Pray for our armies which, in the west, the east, and the south, are fighting with so much valor and tenacity for our common cause. May their guardian angels be with them in action, and keep them chaste and devout in their hours of rest. Let me also specially commend to you our priests, military chaplains or stretcher-bearers; may their ministry be fruitful; may they pass through dangers unspotted, and come back to us strong and pious.

Suffering has made us more compassionate. In days gone by we heard without much emotion of the massacres of the poor Armenians. Mussulman fanaticism has caused the death of thousands upon thousands of these unhappy people in the course of the present war, and has carried off their women and their young girls into slavery. Have pity on them; pray for them.

Poland, noble Poland, always faithful to her creed and her vows, who has never embarked on any war of conquest, but has always fought for the liberty of nations and for European civiliza-

[1] "Summa Theol.," 2, 2 q. 26, a. 7.

tion, has suffered more than we have done; her sons are scattered in Russian, Austrian and German battalions; her soil has been torn and ravaged by the ebb and flood of armies; America cannot feed her; pray for her, my Brethren, and ask God to grant that at least one of the happy results of this horrible war may be the definitive recognition of the independence of Poland.

Finally, here also, in occupied Belgium, let us pray one for another, and love one another. May our affection be sincere and active. The history of Belgian charity during the war will furnish pages worthy to figure beside those in which the heroism of our soldiers will be recorded. Let there be no stain on our national record! Let us all collaborate to the utmost in our union and our mutual help. Let those who are wealthy give liberally to those who are in want, to the infirm and the weak. Refrain from enriching yourselves — this would be hateful indeed — at the expense of the suffering of others.

And let us all remain patient and enduring to the end. Lift up your hearts! Let us redouble our confidence. Let us cry to God, in the words of the holy Liturgy: "O God, come to my aid! O Lord, make haste to help me! *Deus, in adjutorium meum intende. Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina!*" Meanwhile, be calm and courageous; murmur not. Let us apply to our patriotic endurance what our blessed Saviour

says of the work of our eternal salvation: "He that endureth to the end shall be saved. *Qui autem perseveraverit usque in finem hic salvus erit.*" [1]

My beloved Brethren, all and every one of you, Belgians of occupied Belgium and absent compatriots, receive my episcopal and paternal blessing.

D. J. Card. Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines

[1] *Matthew* x. 22.

VI

BELGIUM ENSLAVED

VI

BELGIUM ENSLAVED

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN CARDINAL MERCIER AND THE GERMAN COMMANDERS

Letter of His Eminence, Cardinal Mercier, to Governor-General von Bissing

ARCHDIOCESE OF MALINES,
MALINES, *October* 19, 1916.

SIR:

ON the day after the capitulation of Antwerp the distracted people were asking what would happen to Belgian citizens who were of military age, or who would attain such age before the end of the occupation. In view of the supplications I received from fathers and mothers, I decided to question the Governor of Antwerp, Baron von Huene, who was good enough to reassure me and to authorize me to reassure the griefstricken parents. However, the rumor had spread in Antwerp that at Liège, Namur, and Charleroi young men had been seized and forcibly transported to Germany. I, therefore, asked Governor von Huene to kindly confirm in writing the verbal pledge which he had already given me that nothing of this kind would happen at Antwerp. He answered me immediately that the

rumors of deportations were without foundation, and wrote me a letter containing the following statement: "Young men need have no fear of being sent to Germany, either to be enrolled in the army there, or to be employed at forced labor."

This declaration, written and signed, was publicly communicated to the clergy and faithful of the Province of Antwerp, as Your Excellency may ascertain from the inclosed document dated October 16, 1914, which was read in all the churches.

When your predecessor, the late Baron von der Goltz, arrived in Brussels, I had the honor of waiting on him, and asked him to kindly ratify for the whole country, and without any limitation of time, the pledges which General von Huene had given me for the Province of Antwerp. The Governor-General retained my petition to examine it at leisure. The following day he was good enough to come in person to Malines and bring me his approval. There, in the presence of two aides-de-camp and of my private secretary, he confirmed the promise that the liberty of Belgian citizens would be respected.

To doubt the authority of such pledges would have been an insult to the persons who had signed them, and I therefore employed all the powers of persuasion I possessed to dispel the persistent uneasiness of the families concerned.

But now your Government is tearing away from their homes workers who, through no fault of their own, have been reduced to a state of "unemployment." [1] It is violently separating them from their wives and children, and deporting them to a foreign land. A large number of workmen have already met this unhappy fate; more numerous still are those who are menaced with the same violence.

In the name of the freedom of domicile and the freedom of labor; in the name of the inviolability of family life; in the name of morality, which the policy of deportation would gravely compromise; in the name of the pledges given by the Governor of Antwerp and the Governor-General, the immediate representative of the supreme authority in the German empire, I respectfully ask Your Excellency to have the measures of compulsory labor and deportation repealed, and to restore to their hearths those Belgian workmen who have been already deported.

Your Excellency will appreciate how heavy would be the weight of my responsibility towards families if the confidence which they have reposed in you through my intervention and on

[1] It may be well to remind the reader that the present "unemployment" (*chômage*) in Belgium is mainly the result of the patriotic refusal of the inhabitants to work for Germany. As the terms "chômage" and "chômeurs" (unemployed) have thus a special meaning in this controversy, it has been thought well to place between quotation marks their English equivalents. — TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

my recommendation were lamentably deceived. I cannot, however, believe that such will be the case.

Yours most respectfully,
(*Signed*) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER
Archbishop of Malines

HIS EXCELLENCY, BARON VON BISSING,
Governor-General, Brussels.

On the same day Cardinal Mercier sent the following letter to Baron von der Lancken, the head of the political department at Brussels and the most important German official after the Governor-General, inclosing a copy of the above protest addressed to Baron von Bissing.

Letter of His Eminence, Cardinal Mercier, to Baron von der Lancken

ARCHDIOCESE OF MALINES,
MALINES, *October* 19, 1916.

SIR:

I have had the honor of sending His Excellency, Baron von Bissing, a letter of which I inclose a copy.

Repeatedly and even publicly the Governor-General has expressed his intention to reserve a large share of his solicitude for the interests of the occupied territory, and you yourself have so often affirmed the wish of the German authorities not to perpetuate during the period of occupation the state of war which existed during its

early days. Consequently, I cannot believe that you will put into execution the measures with which your Government threatens the Belgian workmen who have been reduced, through no fault of their own, to a state of "unemployment."

I hope you will use all your influence with the higher authorities to prevent such a crime.

Do not speak to us, I beg of you, of the need of maintaining public order, nor of the burden on public charity. Spare us this bitter irony. You are well aware that public order is not menaced, and that every moral and civil influence would spontaneously coöperate with you if public order were endangered. The "unemployed" are not a burden on official charity, and it is not from your finances that they derive support.

Consider whether it is not to the interest of Germany, as well as to your own, to respect the pledges signed by two high officials of your Empire.

I feel confident that my petitions to the Governor-General and you will not be misinterpreted or misunderstood, and beg to remain,

Yours respectfully,

(*Signed*) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER
Archbishop of Malines

BARON VON DER LANCKEN,
Chief of the Political Department, Brussels.

On October 26, Governor-General von Bissing sent Cardinal Mercier a letter which left

no doubt in the mind of His Eminence that the German authorities had resolved to continue the wholesale deportations of Belgian citizens. This document was sent in French and in German. The following is a translation of the authentic French text.

General von Bissing's Answer to His Eminence Cardinal Mercier

BRUSSELS, *October* 26, 1916.

YOUR EMINENCE:

In your favor of October 19, Your Eminence has requested that Belgian "unemployed" should not be transported to Germany. While fully appreciating Your Eminence's point of view, I feel it my duty to answer that you have not considered all the aspects of the very difficult problem of "unemployment" in Belgium. This is especially the case with regard to certain quite abnormal circumstances, which have been brought about by two years of warfare and which Your Eminence has not considered in all their bearing. The measures which you wish countermanded are only the expression of an imperious necessity, and an inevitable consequence of the war. Of this you will find an explanation below.

Your Eminence begins your letter by recalling the declarations which were made by my predecessor and the Military Governor of Antwerp in October, 1914. These declarations referred

to facts directly linked with the military operations. They related to Belgians who were subject to military service, and who, in accordance with the generally accepted customs of warfare, could not have been brought as civil prisoners to Germany. At this period England and France were removing from neutral ships sailing on the high seas all Germans between the ages of seventeen and fifty years and interning them in concentration camps. Germany has not applied the same measure to Belgium. The declarations made to Your Eminence to enable you to reassure the population have been strictly observed. In any case, these declarations were a proof of the good intentions with which the German Governor-Generals undertook the administration of the occupied territory. In view of the clandestine and wholesale emigration of young Belgians to rejoin the Belgian army, the German authorities would have been completely justified in following the example of England and France. They have not done so. The utilization of Belgian "unemployed" in Germany, which is being inaugurated only after two years of warfare, differs essentially from throwing men of military age into captivity. The measure has nothing at all to do with the conduct of the war, properly speaking, but is occasioned by social and economic conditions.

The economic isolation of Germany — a policy which England has pursued mercilessly and with

the utmost vigor — has extended to and pressed ever more heavily on Belgium. Belgian industry and commerce, which depend largely on the importation of raw materials and the export of manufactured goods, were vitally injured. The inevitable consequence was the lack of work for the mass of the population. The system of granting subventions, which were allowed on a large scale to the "unemployed," might be acceptable in the case of a war of short duration. The long duration of the war fostered an abuse of these grants, and introduced a condition of affairs which is intolerable from the social standpoint. As early as the spring of 1915 far-seeing Belgians approached me and pointed out the perils of the situation. They emphasized the fact that, no matter who might furnish the funds at present, the grants would ultimately become a burden on the resources of Belgium. They pointed out, moreover, that the grants are encouraging the workers to give themselves over and accustom themselves to idleness. The inevitable consequence of the prolongation of "unemployment" would be the moral and physical deterioration of the workers. Skilled workmen, especially, would lose their technical aptitude for their trades, and would grow useless for industry in coming times of peace. In accordance with these representations and in collaboration with the competent Belgian department, my Orders of August, 1915,

against deliberate "unemployment" were framed. These ordinances were completed by the Order of May 1, 1916, and provided for compulsion only when a workman refuses, without a valid reason, to undertake at proper wages a work suited to his ability, and thus becomes a charge on public charity. Every refusal based on the right of nations is formally recognized as valid. Consequently, no workman can be compelled to participate in works connected with the war. Your Eminence will recognize that these Orders are based on sound principles of legislation, which, it is true, place general interests above individual liberty. The social sores, which made their appearance in 1915, having developed into a public calamity, it is now our duty to apply efficaciously the Orders in question.

Your Eminence invokes the high ideal of family virtues in your letter. I may be permitted to answer that, like Your Eminence, I rate this ideal very highly, but for this reason I must also declare that the working classes would be in the gravest danger of losing sight of all ideals, if we tolerated a condition which would inevitably grow worse. For idleness is the worst enemy of family life. Men who work for their families at a distance from their homes — a condition which has always existed among Belgian workmen — undoubtedly contribute more to the well-being of their families than the "unemployed" who

remain at home. Men who undertake work in Germany can maintain their relations with their families. At regular intervals they are given leave of absence to return to their homes. They can bring their families to Germany, where also they will find priests who know their language.

Using their simple common sense, a large number of the people have already recognized these facts, and tens of thousands of Belgian workmen have gone of their own free will to Germany. There, placed on a level with German workmen, they earn high wages which they have never known in Belgium. Instead of sinking into misery, as their comrades who remained at home have done, they are improving their own condition and that of their families. A large number of others would like to follow their example, but do not dare to do so, because influences brought systematically to bear upon them make them hesitate. If they do not rid themselves of these influences within a reasonable time, they must submit to compulsion. The responsibility for whatever rigorous measures are then taken, which might have been avoided, must fall on those who have prevented them from working. To enable Your Eminence to judge the situation in its entirety, I ask you to consider the following explanations which are the very essence of the problem:

The isolation policy adopted by England has

necessarily resulted in the establishment of a community of economic interests between the occupied territories and Germany, and Germany is practically the only country with which Belgium can have commercial relations. Although the practice is common between enemy countries, Germany has not refused to make payments in Belgium, and consequently German money is always entering the country. The wages of Belgians working in Germany increase this flow still further. Besides, the occupation itself results in a constant movement of money to Belgium, and to this must be added the war levies which, in accordance with the established and recognized principle, are spent exclusively in the country. The community of interests resulting from existing conditions imposes on both parties, by the very logic of things, the necessity of exchange and of maintaining a proper equilibrium between the elements of economic life. Hundreds of thousands of workmen being idle in Belgium while there is a shortage of labor in Germany, it becomes both a social and economic duty to employ the Belgian "unemployed" in productive work in Germany. This is necessitated by the community of interests. If there is any objection to be offered to this condition of things, it should be addressed to England, which has created the necessity by its policy of isolation.

Your Eminence will see from the foregoing

that the problem is very complex. I should feel a deep satisfaction if, after my explanation, you would examine the problem from the social and economic standpoint.

Yours most respectfully

(*Signed*) FRH. VON BISSING

Lieutenant-General

HIS EMINENCE, CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines, Malines.

The above letter showed clearly that the German authorities had no intention of acceding to the legitimate complaints of the Belgian people. The deportations continued with that pitiless regularity which characterizes even the harshest measures of the Berlin Government, as if the sufferings and complaints of tens of thousands of men, women, and innocent children counted as nothing with the occupying Power. The only resort of the Belgian bishops was to direct public opinion towards the vexatious measures taken by the invader. On November 7, therefore, the Belgian bishops issued the Appeal to Public Opinion.

Appeal of the Belgian Bishops to Public Opinion

MALINES, *November* 7, 1916.

The military authorities are deporting daily from Belgium to Germany thousands of inoffensive citizens and there assigning them to forced labor.

On October 19, we sent the Governor-General a protest, copies of which were sent to the representatives of the Holy See, Spain, the United States, and Holland at Brussels. The Governor-General replied that it was impossible to grant our petition. At the time of our protest the ordinances of the occupying Power menaced only the "unemployed." To-day, all able-bodied men are being taken away indiscriminately, herded into wagons, and deported no one knows where, like a troop of slaves. The work of the enemy is proceeding by districts. A vague rumor had reached our ears that arrests had been made in the depots at Tournai, at Ghent, and at Alost, but we did not know under what conditions. Between October 24 and November 2 the enemy was active in the region of Mons, Quiévrain, Saint-Ghislain, Jemappes, drafts of from eight hundred to twelve hundred men being arrested daily. To-morrow and the following days the district of Nivelles will be descended on. Here is a copy of the notice announcing the outrage:

"By order of the *Kreischef* all persons of the male sex of over seventeen years of age are summoned to be present at the Place St. Paul, Nivelles, November 8, 1916, at eight o'clock (H. B.), nine o'clock (H. C.), bringing their identification cards, and also (if they possess them) their *Meldeamt* cards.

"Only small hand baggage may be brought.

"Anyone who does not present himself will be forcibly deported to Germany, and will be liable besides to a heavy fine and long imprisonment.

"Ecclesiastics, doctors, lawyers, and teachers are not required to present themselves.

"The burgomasters will be held responsible for the proper execution of this order, which must be brought immediately to the attention of the inhabitants."

There is an interval of twenty-four hours between the posting of the notice and the deportation.

Under the pretext that certain public works had to be executed on Belgian soil, the occupying Power had endeavored to obtain from the communes the lists of "unemployed" workmen. Most of the communes proudly refused to supply this information.

Three Orders of the Governor-General were issued to prepare the way for the blow which strikes us to-day.

On August 15, 1915, the first Order imposed compulsory labor on all "unemployed" under penalty of a fine and imprisonment, but declared that they would be engaged only on works in Belgium, and that infringements of the decree would be tried by Belgian tribunals.

A second Order, of May 2, 1916, reserves to the German authorities the right of furnishing work for the "unemployed," and threatens with

a penalty of three years' imprisonment and a fine of 20,000 marks, any person who shall have any works executed which are not authorized by the Governor-General. By virtue of this same Order, the competence to try infringements of the Order is transferred from Belgian to German tribunals.

A third Order, dated May 13, 1916, "authorizes the Governors, military commanders, and district chiefs, to order the 'unemployed' to be forcibly conducted to the places where they are to work." This was, true enough, forced labor, but always on Belgian territory.

To-day it is no longer forced labor in Belgium but in Germany and for the benefit of the Germans. And, to give an outward semblance of plausibility to its violent measures, the occupying Power cites the following two pretexts in the German press of Germany and Belgium: The "unemployed" are a menace to public order, and a charge on official charity.

These allegations have been answered in the letter which we addressed to the Governor-General and the Chief of his political department on October 19:

"You are well aware that public order is not menaced, and that every moral and civil influence would spontaneously coöperate with you if public order were endangered.

"The 'unemployed' are not a burden on official

charity, and it is not from your finances that they derive support."

In his reply, the Governor-General no longer invokes these two considerations, but alleges that the grants to the "unemployed," from whatsoever source they may come at present, must eventually be a burden on our finances, and that it is the task of a good administrator to relieve them of these charges. He adds that "the prolongation of 'unemployment' would deprive our workmen of their technical aptitude, and that they would grow useless for industry in coming times of peace."

There were, it is true, other means to protect our finances — for example, by sparing us war levies which have already attained a thousand-millions, and are mounting at the rate of forty millions a month; by sparing us requisitions in kind, which already amount to several thousand millions, and are exhausting our country.

There were other means available for preserving the skill of our trained workmen — for example, by leaving Belgian industry its machinery and accessories, its raw materials and the manufactured products which have been sent from Belgium to Germany. Nor is it in the quarries or lime-kilns, to which the Germans declare they will send our "unemployed," that our specialists will perfect their professional education.

The naked truth is that every deported work-

man means a soldier added to the German army, for he will take the place of a German workman who will be made into a soldier.

Consequently, the situation which we denounce to the civilized world may be reduced to these terms: Four hundred thousand workers are reduced to "unemployment" through no fault of their own and largely because of the German occupation. Sons, husbands, and fathers, they bear their unhappy lot unmurmuringly and respect public order. Provision for their most pressing needs has been made, thanks to our national solidarity. By dint of parsimony and generous self-denial, they are saved from extreme misery, and are awaiting with dignity the end of our common trial, safe in the intimacy which is fostered by national grief.

Gangs of soldiers force their way into these peaceful households, and tear the young men from their parents, the husband from his wife, the father from his children. At the point of the bayonet, the soldiers prevent wives and mothers from throwing themselves into the arms of the departing ones to bid them a last adieu. The captives are ranged in groups of forty or fifty, and forcibly hoisted into railroad wagons. The locomotive is under steam, and, as soon as the train is filled, an officer gives the signal to start. Another thousand Belgians have been reduced to slavery, and, without a preliminary trial, have

been condemned to the severest punishment in the penal code except death — deportation. They do not know whither they are going, nor how long their absence will endure. All they know is that their work will benefit only the enemy. In several cases, by bribes or threats, a contract, which the Germans venture to describe as "voluntary," has been extorted from the exiles.

Furthermore, while the "unemployed" are indeed enrolled, a large number of others who have never been unemployed, and belong to the most varied professions, have been also recruited. This latter class, which formed twenty-five per cent of the total in the district of Mons, includes butchers, bakers, foremen-tailors, brass workers, electricians and farmers. Even the very young were taken — students in colleges, universities and other high schools.

And yet two high officials of the German Empire had formally guaranteed us the liberty of our fellow-citizens.

On the day after the capitulation of Antwerp, the distracted population was asking what would become of Belgians who were of military age, or who would attain such age before the end of the occupation. Baron von Huene, Military Governor of Antwerp, then authorized me to reassure anxious parents in his name. Nevertheless, as it was rumored in Antwerp that young men had been seized at Liège, Namur, and Charleroi and de-

ported to Germany, I begged Governor von Huene to confirm in writing the guarantees which he had given me verbally. He answered that the rumors of deportations were groundless, and gave me without hesitation the written statement which was read in all the parish churches of the Province of Antwerp, on Sunday, October 18, 1914: "Young men need have no fear of being sent to Germany, either to be enrolled in the army there, or to be employed at forced labor."

On the arrival of Baron von der Goltz in Brussels, in the capacity of Governor-General, I went and asked him to ratify for the whole country, and without any limitation of time, the pledges already granted by Governor von Heune for the Province of Antwerp. The Governor-General retained my petition to examine it at leisure. On the following day, he came in person to Malines, bringing his approval and, in the presence of two aides-de-camp and my private secretary, confirmed the promise that the liberty of Belgian citizens would be respected.

In my letter of October 19 last to Baron von Bissing, after reminding him of the pledges given by his predecessor, I concluded:

"Your Excellency will appreciate how heavy would be the weight of my responsibility towards families if the confidence which they have reposed in you through my intervention and on my recommendation were lamentably deceived."

The Governor-General replied: "The utilization of Belgian 'unemployed' in Germany, which is being inaugurated only after two years of warfare, differs essentially from throwing men of military age into captivity. The measure has nothing at all to do with the conduct of the war, properly speaking, but is occasioned by social and economic conditions."

As if the word of an honest man were annulable at the end of one or two years, like an officer's lease!

As if the declaration confirmed in 1914 did not expressly exclude military operations and forced labor!

As if, in fine, every Belgian workman, who takes the place of a German, did not allow the latter to fill a gap in the German army!

We pastors of those flocks which are being torn from us by brutal force, are filled with anguish at the idea of the moral and religious isolation in which our flocks will languish. Impotent witnesses of the grief and terror of so many destroyed and menaced households, we appeal to believers and non-believers alike — among our Allies, in neutral countries, and even among our enemies — who retain a respect for human dignity.

When Cardinal Lavigerie undertook his campaign against slavery, Pope Leo XIII, while blessing his mission, said: "Opinion is more than ever the queen of the world; you should act

through it. Through public opinion alone will you attain victory."

May the Divine Providence graciously inspire all who possess authority, a word or a pen, to rally around our humble Belgian flag for the abolition of European slavery!

May the conscience of man triumph over all sophisms, and remain unalterably faithful to the great maxim of St. Ambrose: Honor above all! *Nihil præferendum honestati!*

In the name of the Belgian Bishops, [1]

(*Signed*) D. J. Card. Mercier
Archbishop of Malines

In his letter of October 26 to Cardinal Mercier, the Governor-General endeavored to justify the measures adopted in Belgium by having recourse to all kinds of sophisms and subterfuges, for example: the situation is no longer the same as it was two years ago; France and England are responsible for the deportations of Belgian workmen; the deportation of the "unemployed" is occasioned by social and economic considerations, and proves the interest we feel in these workmen; besides, it is England which, by its isolation policy, created the actual necessity for the deportations, etc., etc.

Cardinal Mercier believed that he could not allow to go unanswered the false allegations and

[1] We were unable to get into communication with the Bishop of Bruges.

calumnies about Belgian workmen contained in the above-mentioned letter. He therefore wrote the following letter to Baron von Bissing on November 10, 1916.

Second Letter of His Eminence, Cardinal Mercier, to Governor-General von Bissing

ARCHDIOCESE OF MALINES,
MALINES, *November* 10, 1916.

SIR:

I refrain from expressing to Your Excellency the sentiments aroused in me by your letter (I, 10051), written in answer to that which I had the honor to address to you on October 19 on the subject of the deportation of the "unemployed."

I have a melancholy recollection of the words which Your Excellency pronounced in my presence on his arrival in Brussels, emphasizing every syllable: "I hope that our relations will be loyal. . . . I have been given the mission of dressing the wounds of Belgium."

My letter of October 19 reminded Your Excellency of the pledge given by Baron von Huene, Military Governor of Antwerp, and ratified some days later by Baron von der Goltz, your predecessor as Governor-General at Brussels. The pledge was explicit, absolute and without limitation as to time: "Young men need have no fear of being sent to Germany, there either to be

enrolled in the army or *to be employed at forced labor.*"

This pledge has been violated thousands of times daily during the last fortnight.

Baron von Huene and the late Baron von der Goltz made no such condition, as your dispatch of October 26 would suggest: "If the occupation does not last more than two years, men of military age will not be sent into captivity." They stated unconditionally that "young men, and, still more, men who have reached a mature age, will not be imprisoned, nor subjected to forced labor, at any time during the period of the occupation."

To justify himself, Your Excellency adduces the conduct of England and France, which have, Your Excellency states, "removed all Germans between the ages of seventeen and fifty from neutral vessels and interned them in concentration camps."

If England and France had committed an injustice, your vengeance should be directed against the English and French, and not against an inoffensive and disarmed people. But has there been an injustice? We are ill informed as to what happens outside the walls of our prison, but we feel greatly tempted to believe that the Germans so seized and interned belonged to the reserve forces of the Imperial army. They were thus soldiers whom England and France were

justified in sending to the concentration camps. Only since August, 1913, has Belgium inaugurated universal military service for all her citizens.

Belgians between the ages of seventeen and fifty years, now residing in the occupied part of Belgium, are thus civilians and non-combatants. It is playing with words to compare them to German reservists by applying to them the equivocal phrase: "men liable to military service."

The Orders, notices and press comments, which were intended to prepare public opinion for the measures now being put into execution, relied mainly on two points: The "unemployed," it was affirmed, are a danger to public safety, and they are a charge on official charity.

As already stated in my letter of October 19, it is not true that our workmen have disturbed, or even threatened anywhere, public order. Five millions of Belgians and hundreds of Americans are astonished witnesses of the dignity and unwavering patience of our working class.

It is not true that our "unemployed" are a charge either on the occupying Power or on the charity provided by its Administration. The National Committee, in which the occupying Power has no active participation, is the sole provider of support for the innocent victims of forced "unemployment."

These two statements, made already in my previous letter, have remained unanswered.

Your letter of October 26 attempts another method of justification. It alleges that the measures against the "unemployed" were necessitated by "social" and "economic" reasons. Because it has a warmer and more intelligent devotion to the interests of the Belgian nation than we, the German Government is rescuing the workman from idleness and preventing him from losing his technical aptitude. Forced labor is the exchange value of the economical advantages which we derive from our commercial relations with the Empire.

Finally, if Belgium has any complaints to make with regard to her condition, let her address them to England, who is the chief culprit. "It is she who, by her policy of isolation, has occasioned this necessity."

A few brief and frank statements will be sufficient answer to this pleading, which is halting and complicated in the original letter.

Every Belgian workman will release a German workman, who will be one soldier more for the German army. There, in all its simplicity, is the dominating fact of the situation. The writer of the letter himself appreciates this vital fact, for he states: "The measure has nothing at all to do with the war, *properly speaking*." It has thus some connection with the war "improperly speaking;" and what does this mean except that, while the Belgian workman does not actually

bear arms, he releases a German worker who will bear them? The Belgian workman is compelled to coöperate, indirectly but evidently, in the war against his own country. This is in manifest contradiction to the spirit of the Hague Convention.

Again, the lack of "employment" has not been caused by the Belgian workman or England; it is the effect of the German regime of occupation.

The occupying Power has taken possession of large quantities of raw materials destined for our national industries. It has seized and sent to Germany machinery, tools, and metals from our mills and workshops. With the possibility of national industry thus destroyed, the workman is faced with the alternative of working for the German Empire — here or in Germany — or of remaining idle. To the regret of the majority, some tens of thousands of workmen have undertaken work for the foreign Government under the pressure of fear or hunger. But four hundred thousand working men and women preferred "unemployment," with its privations, to the betrayal of the interests of their native land, and these live in poverty and dependence on the meager assistance given them by the National Relief Committee, which is controlled by the ministers of Spain, America, and Holland. Calm and deserving, they bear their hard lot unmurmuringly. Nowhere has there been a revolt, or

a semblance of a revolt. Employers and workmen courageously await the end of their long trial.

The communal administrations and private individuals tried to diminish the undeniable evils of "unemployment," but the occupying Power paralyzed their efforts. The National Committee tried to organize technical instruction for the "unemployed." This practical instruction, while respecting the dignity of our workmen, was to preserve their skill, increase their capabilities, and prepare them to do their part in the rebuilding of their country. Who opposed this noble movement, after the plans had been worked out by our industrial leaders? *The occupying Power.* Nevertheless, the communes strove to have works of public utility executed by the "unemployed." The Governor-General made these works conditional on an official authorization, which was then, as a rule, refused. The cases are not rare, I am assured, in which the Government authorized works of this nature on the express condition that they were not entrusted to the "unemployed."

"Unemployment" was thus desired. An army of "unemployed" was being recruited. And, in face of these facts, they dare to apply to our workingmen the insulting appellative, "idler."

No, the Belgian workman is not an idler. He is devoted to his work. This he has proved in

the noble struggles of economic life. When he scorned the highly paid work offered him by the occupying Power, he was actuated by patriotic dignity. As pastor of our people, we share more intimately than ever its sorrows and distress, and know what it has cost at times to prefer independence in privation to comfort in subjection. Cast no stone at this people. It is entitled to your respect.

Your letter of October 26 states that England is primarily responsible for the "unemployment" of our workmen, because she has not allowed raw materials to enter Belgium.

England generously allows foodstuffs to enter Belgium under the control of the neutral countries — Spain, the United States, and Holland. She would assuredly allow the importation of the raw materials necessary for our industries under the same control, if Germany would bind herself to leave them to us and not seize the products of our industrial labor.

But Germany, by divers methods (notably, by the organization of its *Zentral-Stellen*, in which neither the Belgians nor the neutral officers can exercise an effective control), is absorbing a considerable part of the products of our agriculture and industrial plants. There thus results a disquieting increase in the cost of living, which is causing grave privations for those who have no savings. The "community of interests," whose

great value for us is lauded in your letter, is not the normal equilibrium of commercial exchanges, but the predominance of the strong over the weak. Do not, I beg of you, represent this state of inferiority to which we are reduced as a privilege which would justify forced work for our enemy, and the deportation of legions of innocent people into exile.

Slavery and deportation, the hardest punishment in the penal code after death — has Belgium, which never did you an evil, merited from you this treatment, which calls to Heaven for vengeance?

Sir, at the beginning of my letter, I recalled the noble utterance of Your Excellency: "I have come to Belgium with the mission of dressing your country's wounds."

If Your Excellency, like our priests, could visit the homes of our workmen and hear the lamentations of wives and mothers, for whom your ordinances spell mourning and dread, you would realize better how gaping are the wounds of the Belgian people.

Two years ago, people are saying, we faced death, pillage, and conflagration, but it was war. To-day it is no longer war; it is cold calculation, premeditated destruction, the victory of might over right, the debasement of human nature, a defiance of humanity.

It is within the power of Your Excellency to

stifle these outcries of outraged conscience. May God, whom we invoke with all the ardor of our soul on behalf of our oppressed people, inspire in you the pity of the Good Samaritan!

Yours most respectfully,

(*Signed*) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER
Archbishop of Malines

HIS EXCELLENCY, BARON VON BISSING,
Governor-General, Brussels.

On November 23, Governor-General von Bissing sent His Eminence, Cardinal Mercier, the following answer, which is translated from the German text.

Governor-General von Bissing's Answer to the Second Letter of His Eminence, Cardinal Mercier

THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF BELGIUM, P. A. I. 11254.
BRUSSELS, *November* 23, 1916.

YOUR EMINENCE:

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of Your Eminence's favor of the 10th inst., as also of the manuscript letter of the 15th inst. concerning the delay in delivery. I wish to reply as follows.

On October 19 of this year, Your Eminence sent me a petition with a view to having a stop put to the employment in Germany of idle Belgian workmen. In my reply of October 28, while appreciating at its proper value the point of view which you take, I explained the reasons

and the considerations which compelled the occupying Power to take certain steps in connection with the question of the workmen. These measures were not the result of arbitrary judgment or of an insufficient study of the difficult problem, but were adopted after an exhaustive examination of the circumstances involved, and in face of a necessity which must be recognized as unavoidable. As regards the general aspects of the question, I thus find myself obliged to refer Your Eminence to my statements of October 28. Your objections to these statements either rest on erroneous interpretation of them, or are the result of conceptions of which I cannot approve in their essence. For "unemployment," which has attained considerable proportions in Belgium, is a great social wound, while it is a social benefit for the Belgian workers to be put to work in Germany. It is true that, on my arrival in Belgium, I told Your Eminence I wished to heal the wounds which war had caused among the Belgian people; but the measures now taken are not in contradiction to these words. I may also say that Your Eminence misinterprets facts when you try to ignore my frequently successful efforts to reëstablish economic life in Belgium by remarking that an artificial "unemployment" has been thereby created. England has imposed unacceptable conditions on the importation of raw materials into Belgium and the export of manufactured goods. During

the war these questions have been the subject of serious negotiations with competent persons of both Belgian nationality and neutral nations, but it would be too tedious to explain them here. I can only repeat that, in the last analysis, the deplorable conditions are a result of England's isolation policy, just as the requisition of raw materials were an inevitable consequence of the same policy. I must also absolutely maintain that, from the economic standpoint, the occupying Power is guaranteeing Belgium all the advantages that can be assured her in the face of the constraint exercised by England.

The execution of the measures taken in connection with the "unemployed" has caused my administration many difficulties, which in turn entail hardship for the population. All this hardship might have been avoided if the communal administrations had coöperated properly with us in rendering the execution more simple and better adapted to the end proposed. Under existing conditions it has been necessary to extend the measures to a wider circle so as to bring within their scope a larger number of persons. Every possible precaution has, however, been taken to diminish the number of errors. Definite categories of persons, determined by their occupation, are relieved of the obligation of presenting themselves, and individual complaints are examined immediately or adjourned for further examination.

Your Eminence will see from the above statements that it is impossible to grant your request of repealing the measures which have been taken, but that, in the application of these measures, nothing that it is possible to do in the public interest is being left undone, in spite of the difficulties which have arisen.

Yours most respectfully,

(*Signed*) FRH. VON BISSING
Lieutenant-General

HIS EMINENCE, CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines, Malines.

Despite the numerous protests and petitions of the civil powers in Belgium, despite the Appeal of the Belgian Bishops to Public Opinion, despite the strong letters of protest addressed by Cardinal Mercier to the German authorities, the enemy continued the deportations in contravention of all rights and treaties. The intrepid Cardinal of Malines spent three days paying consolatory visits to families which had been reduced to the depths of physical and moral misery by the iniquitous measures of an enemy devoid of every sentiment of pity and humanity. No longer able to restrain the indignation provoked by so much suffering and so much injustice, His Eminence resolved to attack publicly the violation of the rights of the workmen, to proclaim that injustice "resting on force remains none the less injustice," to declare the deep sorrow of the bishops

at the sufferings of their flocks, and to urge his fellow-countrymen to await in patience and dignity peace with victory.

On November 26, 1916, the Cardinal delivered the following sermon in the Church of Sainte Gudule at Brussels on the occasion of the Mass prescribed in honor of Our Lady of Help for the intentions of the deported and their families:

FOR THOSE IN CAPTIVITY

"Ye shall be My disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." — *John* viii. 32–33.

My Very Dear Brethren:

The four or five weeks which have just gone by are probably the most unhappy of my life and the most heartbreaking of my episcopal service. The fathers and mothers who are gathered round this pulpit will understand me.

The office of the bishop is a spiritual fatherhood. St. Paul even called it a motherhood when he wrote to the Galatians: "My little children, of whom I am in labor again, until Christ be formed in you." [1]

Now I have seen hundreds of my flock in danger and in grief. For three days, last Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, morning and evening, I have been traveling through those parts of the country

[1] *Galatians* iv. 19.

whence the first laborers and workmen of my diocese were forcibly carried into exile. At Wavre, Court St. Etienne, Nivelles, Tubize, Braine-l'Alleud, I entered more than a hundred homes that are now half empty. The husband was gone, the children were orphaned, the sisters sat at their sewing machines, with haggard eyes and hands that were incapable of work. A gloomy silence reigned in every cottage. You might have fancied that there was a dead body within.

But hardly could we say one kind word to the mother before the sobs broke out, and with them words of sorrow and anger, and magnificent outbursts of pride.

The memory of these heartbreaking scenes will never leave me.

I would willingly have hastened to Antwerp, Tirlemont, Aerschot, Diest, wherever I might have found them repeated, wherever I might have found sorrow to soothe, tears to dry, or hearts to comfort.

But I could not do it. My strength and my time alike failed me.

And so, dear Brethren, I resolved to come to you, here at the center of my diocese and of our country. You shall become the missionaries of my thoughts, you shall make my feelings known.

Pax vobiscum is the traditional greeting of the bishop — Peace be with you — and so I bring you now a word of peace.

But there can be no peace without order, and order reposes upon justice and charity.

We desire order, and it is for this reason that, from the first, we have begged that no active resistance be offered to the Power that is in occupation of our country and that all its regulations be implicitly obeyed, so long as they offend against neither our conscience as Christians nor our honor as Belgians. But that Power must also desire order, that is to say, it must respect our rights and its own promises.

In every civilized country the citizen has a right to work freely. He has a right to his home. He has a right to refuse his services to any but his own country.

Regulations which infringe these rights can bind our conscience in no way.

I tell you this, my Brethren, without anger and in no spirit of vengeance. I were unworthy of this ring which the Church has put upon my finger, of this cross which she has placed upon my breast, if I yielded to human weakness and hesitated to declare that, though they be violated, rights remain rights, and that injustice which reposes upon force is none the less injustice.

There can be no order without justice; none without charity. Charity is Union. And Union is the Law of Man, the law of the three-fold domain of life in which Nature and Faith give him his being and his growth, the Family, the

Country, and the Fellowship of all Christian people.

Every man's duty is to his country, and it is the duty of every class to coöperate with the others for the national welfare.

The Christian belongs to his diocese. To the Catholic Church, his mother, he is bound through his bishop alone.

And it is on this account, my Brethren, that to-day your bishops' hearts are bleeding. They have seen thousands of their sons dragged beyond the reach of their pastoral care, driven towards the unknown, lost sheep without a shepherd, a prey to the dangers of isolation, impotent fury, perhaps of despair.

And a great event of history presents itself to their memory. When Pope Pius VII was in captivity at Savona, he put his trust in his Heavenly Mother, whom, since the victory of Lepanto, Europe had named "Our Lady, Help of Christians." The day after he had been set free, the Holy Father was constrained to demonstrate his own piety and the gratitude of Christendom by instituting a yearly festival to the glory of Our Lady of Help.

We also offer, through the mediation of the most Holy Virgin Mary, our humble entreaties to the Sovereign Lord "who reigneth in the Heavens and on whom all the Kingdoms of the Earth depend," to restore to us quickly our

captive workers, and to keep our homes still inviolate until the day when we shall all, in the peace of victory, embrace one another around the triumphant altar of our Lady of Ransom.

Courage, then, my brothers — keep the commandments of Christ. Be loyal to Belgium, your Homeland.

From the depths of my heart I give you all my paternal blessing.

It may well be understood that this bold and patriotic address, which emphasizes the fact that right and might are not synonymous, contributed greatly to sustain the admirable courage of the people and to soften the unmerited sufferings of the unfortunate victims of the iniquitous invader. It could not prevent the continued violation of right by might. With a pitiless brutality, which might have been dispensed with in the execution of measures already sufficiently cruel, "unemployed" and employed continued to be torn from their families and deported to Germany.

Wishing to make one more effort to help his unfortunate fellow-countrymen, the Cardinal of Malines sent another letter to the Governor-General on November 29, denouncing the arbitrary and inhuman procedure of the Germans and appealing to the supreme authorities of the empire.

Third Letter of His Eminence, Cardinal Mercier, to Governor-General von Bissing

ARCHDIOCESE OF MALINES,
MALINES, *November* 29, 1916.

SIR:

The letter of November 23 (I, 11254), with which Your Excellency has honored me, is a disappointment to me. In several circles, which I had reason for believing very well-informed, it was said that Your Excellency thought it a duty to protest to the highest authorities of the Empire against the measures which you were compelled to apply in Belgium. I therefore expected at least a delay in the application of these measures, while they were being subjected to a further examination, and a softening of the methods which accompanied their execution.

But, without answering a word to any of the arguments whereby I established the anti-juridical and anti-social character of the condemnation of Belgian workmen to forced labor and deportation, Your Excellency contents himself with repeating in his dispatch of November 23 the very text of his letter of October 26. The two letters of October 26 and November 23 are indeed identical in substance and almost identical in form.

On the other hand, the recruiting of so-called "unemployed" is progressing for the most part without any regard for the opinions of the local

authorities. Several reports in my possession prove that the clergy are brutally set aside, and the burgomasters and communal councillors reduced to silence. The recruiting agents thus find themselves confronted with men of whom they know nothing, and arbitrarily make their choice.

Of such procedure there are abundant examples. I shall quote two very recent instances from the number which I hold at the disposal of Your Excellency.

On November 21 the recruiting was held in the commune of Kesbeek-Miscom. Of the 1325 inhabitants in the commune, the recruiters took away 94 *en bloc*, making no distinction of social condition or profession; farmers' sons, sole support of aged and infirm parents, fathers whose departure left their wives and children in misery — all as necessary for their families as their daily bread. Two families were robbed at once of four sons each. Of the ninety-four deported only two were "unemployed."

The recruiting in the district of Aerschot took place on November 23. At Rillaer, Gelrode, and Rotselaer, some young men who were sole supporters of widowed mothers were recruited. Farmers who were fathers of large families (one farmer, over fifty years of age, had ten children), cultivated their own land, possessed several head of cattle, and had never touched a cent of public charity, were also forcibly deported in spite of

their protests. Twenty-five young lads of seventeen years were taken in the little commune of Rillaer.

Your Excellency would have liked the communal authorities to become accomplices in these odious recruitings. By reason of their legal position and in conscience they could not do so. But they could enlighten the recruiting agencies, and are well qualified to do that. The priests, who know the poorer people better than anyone else does, would be of valuable assistance to the recruiting parties. Why is their coöperation spurned?

At the end of your letter, Your Excellency remarks that men belonging to the liberal professions are not disturbed. If only the "unemployed" were being led away, I should understand this distinction. But if the practice is continued by enrolling able-bodied men without exception, the distinction is unjustifiable. It would be wrong to have the burden of deportation fall on the working class alone. The middle class should have its share in the sacrifice imposed by the occupying Power on the nation, however cruel this sacrifice may be; in fact, it is all the more just for them to share in the sacrifice, when this is cruel. Numbers of my clergy have asked me to claim for them a place in the vanguard of the persecuted ones. I register their offer, and am proud to submit it to you. I am loath to believe that the authorities of the Empire have spoken their last words. They will think of our unde-

served sorrows, of the reprobation of the civilized world, of the judgment of history and the chastisement of God.

Yours most respectfully,
(*Signed*) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER
Archbishop of Malines

HIS EXCELLENCY, BARON VON BISSING,
Governor-General, Brussels.

Vain were all efforts, alas!

And Cardinal Mercier — the glory of the valiant Belgian episcopate, one of the outstanding figures of the world, grander and more admired in proportion as his sorrows increase — goes from town to town, and village to village, consoling the old men, the women and the children, who are suffering for justice' sake.

How long will justice and right continue to be thus despised and violated with impunity?

Instructions of His Eminence, Cardinal Mercier, to the Clergy of his Diocese

His visits to several hundred families of the deported workmen, and the reports of his clergy on the frequently brutal manner in which the deportation orders were executed, inspired the Cardinal of Malines to issue instructions on the matter to the pastors of his diocese. Failing in his noble efforts to make his sentiments of justice, right, humanity, and compassion prevail

with an invader who dreamt only of force and power, Cardinal Mercier, heartbroken at the sufferings and misfortunes of his flock, wished to mitigate the evil which he felt powerless to prevent. He would fain have dried all their tears, consoled every troubled soul, reminded these sorely tried families — which yet did not waver in their allegiance to country and king — of the sublimity of their patriotic endurance. He found food for the children who came to school without breakfast, and for the old men who relinquished their meal to give a morsel of bread to their grandchildren. Like his Divine Master, he would fain have sacrificed himself completely for all, through love of his people and admiration for the heroic virtues which this people had never ceased to display for more than two years. But, as "his strength and his time could not keep pace with his good-will," he addressed himself to his priests and, through them, to all men of good-will, asking them to come to the aid of the suffering.

On December 19, 1916, His Eminence sent the following instructions to the pastors of his diocese.

MALINES, *December* 19, 1916.

MY DEAR PASTORS AND ASSISTANTS:

Despite the protests addressed to Germany by the Sovereign Pontiff and several neutral States, the deportation of our civil population has not ceased.

It is our duty to mitigate, as much as we can, an evil which we are powerless to prevent.

WHEN THE DEPORTATION IS ANNOUNCED

1. As soon as the notice of the convocation has been posted in your commune, please warn the persons who are not dependent on public assistance that they must provide themselves with a receipt of their taxes, and attach to it a certificate of the communal authority. The sick and delicate will ask their physicians to issue to them a certificate of ill-health, and the workmen, who are not "unemployed," will procure from their employers a certificate of service, which will be countersigned by the burgomaster.

2. In conjunction with the influential people of your parish, pay special attention to the interests of your parishioners who, according to the instructions of the German authorities themselves, cannot be deported. Then, act in concert with the communal authorities, with the *Comité de Secours et d'Alimentation*, with your wealthy parishioners and devoted women, with a view to supplying the necessary clothes and assistance for the indigent whose departure is probable.

ON THE EVE OF THE DEPARTURE

On the eve of their departure, or the preceding day, urge the enrolled men to go to confession. Several of you should place yourselves at their

disposal. Celebrate a Mass for their intentions and invite their children, grandchildren, and other adults to be present. The fact that they received Holy Communion in union with their whole family will be a comfort and happy memory for them in their exile. In a practical instruction, exhort them to remain true to their faith and to their moral and religious practices during the period of their absence. Family prayers should be said for them. Give the departing men a souvenir — beads, a scapular, or a New Testament.

ON THE DAY AFTER THE DEPARTURE

1. Issue an appeal to a selected number of charitable parishioners. Get into communication with the branches of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, the Association of the Ladies of Mercy, the Third Order of St. Francis, the Sodalities, confraternities and the various charitable societies affiliated with the Diocesan Federation of Catholic Women, of which Father Halflants is director. With their assistance and under the direction of the pastor or his delegate, form a "committee of moral aid" to visit the bereaved families, console them, and give them advice and assistance. Help them morally, and, if there is need, help them materially. The Christian parish forms one family. When one member of a family suffers, the other members suffer with him; when the family is in affluence, each shares

in it. In the same way there should not be in the parish a single neglected, unknown, or forgotten household. And, if this obligation obtains in normal times, it is imperious in these days of distress. Persons who have leisure should place themselves at the disposal of persons who have not. Whatever some have in superabundance, should supply the necessity of others. Mutual aid, thus understood and practiced, is only the fulfilment of the Christian law. "Bear ye one another's burdens," says St. Paul, "and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ." [1]

Pastors who need assistance in the discharge of their ministry of charity, may come and ask it from me, or send someone on their behalf. I should be grateful to them if they would in such cases state as exactly as possible the amount of assistance they expect.

2. We may not neglect any means of securing the repatriation of those who, according to the declarations of the German Government, should have escaped deportation. A bureau of claims has been organized for this object in our episcopal offices.

The pastors are requested to fill in the attached forms, in triplicate. Extra copies will be sent upon request. The filled-in forms will be collected in the various deaneries, and thence sent as rapidly as possible to the archiepiscopal offices.

[1] *Galatians* vi. 2.

The deans will kindly communicate the above instructions to their colleagues.

You will remind them again of our request of August 14, 1914, that they should say Mass each week for our soldiers who have fallen on the field of honor. Charity commands us to pray and to make others pray for them.

This will be the moment also to rekindle piety and the spirit of penance and sacrifice among your parishioners. Let them offer their good works for the intention of all who are in distress or grief: for our soldiers, the wounded, the absent, the refugees of to-day or exiles of to-morrow; for the intention of our King and his Government, for the intention of our Holy Father the Pope, and I confidently add, as I do at the end of the ceremonies of ordination: "Pray also to the Almighty God for me."

Accept, dear pastors and assistants, the assurance of my affectionate devotion in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Holy See and the Deportations

Cardinal Mercier forwarded to the Sovereign Pontiff several documents dealing with the deportations of Belgians to Germany. On receiving the answer of the Cardinal Secretary of State, he sent it to the pastors of his diocese with the request that they should read it to the faithful: "You will gratefully welcome the enclosed letter

which the Cardinal Secretary of State has sent us, on behalf of the Holy Father. Kindly read this letter to the faithful." The letter is written in Italian. The translation is as follows:

SECRETARIATE OF STATE
OF HIS HOLINESS
No. 23026
VATICAN, *November* 29, 1916.

YOUR EMINENCE:

The Holy Father has received Your Eminence's letter of the 12th inst. and the enclosed documents concerning the deportation of Belgians to Germany.

The venerable Pontiff, in whose paternal heart all the sorrows of his beloved Belgian people find an echo, has ordered me to announce to Your Eminence that he is keenly interesting himself in your harshly tried people, that he has already addressed himself to the Imperial German Government in their favor, and that he will do everything in his power to secure that an end be put to the deportations, and that these who have already been deported far from their native land, may soon return to the bosom of their afflicted families.

His Holiness has also entrusted to me the agreeable duty of transmitting a very special blessing to Your Eminence and the faithful of your diocese.

I am also glad of this opportunity of expressing

to Your Eminence the sentiments of deep veneration with which I humbly salute you.

Your Eminence's humble and devoted servant,

(*Signed*) P. CARDINAL GASPARRI

The intercession of Pope Benedict XV with the German Government has not been crowned with success. The Belgian Government reports that the deportations continue and that only the sick are returned to their homes. However, speaking in his address to the Consistory on December 4, 1916, of the violations of the rights of nations which have taken place during the war, the Holy Father believed it his duty to insist especially on the horrors of the deportations.

We quote here the passage from the Consistorial Address which deals with this subject:

"Wherever the authority of the laws is neglected or scorned, discord and the passions reign, and trouble invades public and private affairs. If this truth needed confirmation, it would find it in the present course of the affairs of the world.

"Does not the horrible folly of this war which ravages Europe, cry out in evidence of what ruin and disaster may result from the scorn of the sovereign laws which govern the relations between States? In this great conflict of nations we see the unworthy treatment meted out to sacred things and the ministers of God (even those of elevated rank), in spite of the sacred

character they possess in virtue of divine right and the law of nations. Large numbers of peaceable citizens are torn from their hearths and conducted away amid the tears of their mothers, their wives, and their children. Unfortified towns and defenseless multitudes are the victims of air raids. Alike on sea and on land, such crimes are perpetrated as fill one's soul with sadness and horror.

"We deplore this accumulation of evils, and again condemn all the iniquities committed in this war, whatever be the theater and whoever the authors."

VII

COURAGE, MY BRETHREN!

VII

COURAGE, MY BRETHREN!

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY, 1917

FEAST OF THE APPARITION OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES

I. *MORAL GRANDEUR OF THE NATION*

My Beloved Brethren

IS it indeed necessary to preach courage to you? And when I say "you," I am thinking more immediately of the faithful companions of our misfortunes, but my thoughts go out also beyond our occupied provinces to our refugees, our prisoners, our deported fellow-countrymen, and our soldiers.

Brethren of our armies of Liège, Haelen, Antwerp, the Yser and Ypres, the Cameroons and East Africa, it is you who are our foremost purveyors of energy. On August 2, 1914, you sprang up from the bosom of all the families of our national aristocracy with splendid ardor, attesting to the world at large that the nobility has preserved its traditional significance in Belgium; the middle classes, the bulwarks of the nation, ranged themselves beside you; a modest *employé* of our city of Malines has six sons at the front;

the working classes, too, furnished their contingent of voluntary recruits, all the more praiseworthy since their departure made a painful void in the home; military chaplains and stretcher-bearers have gladly offered and lavished their devotion; the Government, after two years and six months of trial, is still in harness, with a courage that nothing can weaken; our good wishes follow in the wake of these valiant men; all form a guard of honor, proud and faithful, for our magnanimous Sovereign, who, from the sand-bank which is now all his kingdom, gives to Belgium and to the whole world a perfect example of endurance and of faith in the future.

Those who are fighting for the liberty of the Belgian flag are brave men. Those interned in Holland and Germany, who raise their fettered hands to Heaven on behalf of their country, are brave men. Our exiled compatriots, who bear in silence the weight of their isolation, also serve their Belgian fatherland to the best of their ability, as do also all those souls who, either behind the cloister-walls or in the retirement of their own homes, pray, toil, and weep, awaiting the return of their absent ones, and our common deliverance.

We have listened to the mighty voices of wives and mothers; through their tears they have prayed God to sustain the courage and fidelity to honor of their husbands and sons, carried off

by force to the enemy's factories. These gallant men have been heard at the hour of departure, rallying their energy to instil courage into their comrades, or, by a supreme effort, to chant the national hymn; we have seen some of them on their return, pale, haggard human wrecks; as our tearful eyes sought their dim eyes we bowed reverently before them, for all unconsciously they were revealing to us a new and unexpected aspect of national heroism.

After this, can it be necessary to preach courage to you?

True, there are some shadows in the picture I have sketched for you; there have been weaknesses here and there among our people for which we must blush; I am not referring, be it clearly understood, to the handful of workmen, exhausted by privation, stiff with cold, or crushed by blows, who at last gave utterance to a word of submission; there are limits to human energy. I refer, with deep regret, to the few malefactors who lend themselves to the lucrative parts of informer, courtier, or spy, and to those misguided individuals who are not ashamed to trade upon the poverty of their compatriots. Happily, when future generations look back from the more distant standpoint of History, these blots will die out, and all that will remain for their edification will be the splendid spectacle of a nation of seven millions, which, on the evening of August 2,

with one accord not only refused to allow its honor to be held in question for a moment, but which, throughout over thirty months of ever-increasing moral and physical suffering, on battlefields, in military and civil prisons, in exile, under an iron domination, has remained imperturbable in its self-control, and has never once so far yielded as to cry: This is too much! This is enough!

In our young days our professors of history rightly held up to our admiration Leonidas and the three hundred Spartans, who, instead of seeking safety in easy flight, allowed themselves to be crushed by the Persian army at the Pass of Thermopylæ. They filled us with enthusiasm for the six hundred heroes of Franchimont, who, after risking life and liberty by passing through the camp of the armies of Louis XI and Charles the Bold at night, all fell in an assault of almost frenzied valor and desperate resistance. The teachers of the Belgian generation of to-morrow will have yet other instances of military heroism and patriotism to evoke. And may we not hope that our generation, too, will preserve the memory of the union it has now fashioned, and that in future there will be among us all a deeper wish for national unity, less personal acrimony in the conflict of ideas, a less grudging respect for civil and religious authority, in a word, a more general fidelity, both before public opinion and in the

secret recesses of the soul, to our motto: "Union is strength," an echo of the words of Christ: "*Ut omnes unum sint*; — that they all may be one." [1]

II. *CHRISTIAN GREATNESS*

Nevertheless, my Brethren, we must rise still higher.

True, the natural moral virtues are worthy of all admiration, and he who should refuse them such admiration would be fatuous indeed.

At various periods of unrest there have been arrogant minds which have despised human nature, its resources and its achievements. But Christ and the Church honor it. Our Saviour came not to destroy nature, but to correct its aberrations, and to raise it to a higher level.

Did not Greece give the world thinkers of genius? Is not the wisdom of ancient Rome proverbial? Did not pagan art produce masterpieces which Christian generations have never wearied of admiring and copying? The great Popes Leo XIII and Pius X protected classic literature against those who wished to abolish it in Christian education; and in one of his masterly Encyclicals, Leo XIII expressly enjoined Catholic philosophers to profit by the thought and science of others, no matter where they found them.

[1] *John* xvii. 21.

Intelligence is no more exclusively Christian than are physical health, capacity for work, initiative, energy, or wealth. These gifts of nature are not even bound up with virtue. God, says the Gospel, maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.[1]

As to moral virtue — bravery, for instance, constancy, philanthropy, patriotism in its multiple forms — you must greet it with gratitude and respect wherever you find it. Christianity has no monopoly of it. Nature is not incapable of it, and moreover, the supernatural graces are not exclusively reserved for members of the Catholic Church. It is well to be proud of your faith, but do not imitate the Pharisee who boasted that he was not like other men, and looked down upon the poor publican on whom the God of mercy took pity. "Finally, brethren," says St. Paul, "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever modest, whatsoever just, whatsoever holy, whatsoever lovely, whatsoever of good fame, think on [appreciate] these things." [2] "Loving one another," he says elsewhere, "with honor preventing one another, *diligentes honore invicem prævenientes;*" [3] better still, be humble enough to think your neighbor superior to yourself; you will become con-

[1] *Matthew* v. 45.
[2] *Philippians* iv. 8.
[3] *Romans* xii. 10.

vinced of this, if, instead of taking pleasure in what is good in yourself, you endeavor to look at what is good in others: *in humilitate superiores sibi invicem arbitrantes, non quæ sua sunt singuli considerantes, sed ea, quæ aliorum.* In humility let all esteem others better than themselves. Each one not considering the things that are his own, but those that are other men's.[1]

Nevertheless, my Brethren, when virtue is not inspired by Christian charity, it lacks its chief element. It is not enough, in short, to do good; we must do good aright; now we can only do it aright when we have brought it to a degree of perfection which makes it deserving of eternal life. St. Augustine devoted the greater part of his dogmatic and polemical writings to establishing, as against the rationalists of his day, Pelagians or semi-Pelagians, this fundamental truth: that only works inspired by charity, that is to say, by the love of God, and the love of one's neighbor in the sight of God, have power to open the gates of Paradise to us. The holy doctor would not permit an act of mere natural goodness to be qualified without reservation as "virtuous." "To sum up," he wrote, "virtue is identical with charity, and consists in loving what we ought to love." *Virtus est charitas, qua id quod diligendum est, diligitur.*[2]

[1] *Philippians* ii. 3, 4.
[2] Epist. ad S. Hieron. 167a ed. Vives.

Indeed, did not our Lord Himself declare and insist that all the commandments of God are comprised in the law of love? And does not St. Paul say that love is the fulfilling of the law, *plenitudo ergo legis est dilectio?* [1]

Christianity has not transformed moral greatness, but it has ameliorated, completed, and raised it to that supreme height where it is in immediate contact with God. The soul which possesses charity lives the divine life. God lives in it, and it in God. Jesus Christ is the living bond between it and the Holy Trinity. Thenceforth, the natural worship of morality and of religion cannot suffice; God no longer accepts it. It is through Christ, who sheds the effusions of His life supernaturally into our souls, it is with Christ and in Christ — *per Ipsum et cum Ipso, et in Ipso* — that all honor and glory must rise towards God the Father Almighty in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for ever, in time and in eternity: *Per Ipsum et cum Ipso et in Ipso, est tibi Deo Patri Omnipotenti, in unitate Spiritus Sancti, omnis honor et gloria, per omnia saecula saeculorum.*[2]

How sad it would be, my Brethren, to think that the sufferings endured for nearly three years by millions of immortal souls, would, perhaps in a very considerable number of cases, be lost to eternity! The glory of military successes is, no

[1] *Romans* xiii. 10.
[2] End of the Canon of the Mass.

doubt, enviable; heroism in patience, privation, loss of liberty, and even in the presence of death, is certainly admirable; but the artificers of this glory, those who engendered this heroism, would be greatly to be pitied, if at the turning-point of eternity, suddenly confronted by those sovereign realities they had refused to believe in, they should have to confess, in despair: Fools that we were! We treated the modest lives of the Christians around us as folly; we thought they lacked brilliance, and behold! it is they who now take place among the children of God and in the triumphant assembly of saints. We were deceived then. We did not follow the way of truth, our eyes did not recognize the light of justice, the sun of intelligence did not shine upon us. *Nos insensati, vitam illorum aestimabamus insaniam, et finem illorum sine honore. Ecce quomodo computati sunt inter filios Dei, et inter sanctos sors illorum est. Ergo erravimus a via veritatis, et justitiae lumen non luxit nobis, et sol intelligentiae non est ortus nobis.*[1]

Those who are on the other side of the barrier of Time, our dead of yesterday, of past centuries, would gladly send us a messenger charged to tell us what the rich man of the parable desired to tell his brethren: You have still a span of life before you; you are within reach of the confessional, where the divine Saviour of the world

[1] *Wisdom* v. 4–6.

remits sins by the ministry of His priests, of your parish church, where you can so easily go to pray, and to ask our Lord in His tabernacle, and His Mother, the refuge of sinners, the Mother of divine grace, the almighty mediator for humanity, to grant you the grace of conversion or of perseverance; I entreat you, in the name of your dearest interests, in the name of the affection you bear me, in the name of the tears you shed over my lot, in the name of the deep joy we shall feel when we meet again to part no more, once more I entreat you, be converted, sanctify yourselves, live the lives of Christians and of saints.

My Brethren, if our ordeal is prolonged, it is because the design of divine Love is not yet accomplished.

The design of Providence is a design of love, doubt it not. It is carrying out for some a work of justice, for others a work of mercy; but for all it is, in the divine intention, a work of love.

In God, all attributes are substantially identical. God is Omnipotence, but His omnipotence could not exist without wisdom, and the wisdom of the Almighty is not separable from His love. He can do all things, He knows all things, but He wills only in love. Theology ascribes Omnipotence to the Father, Omniscience to the Son, the Word of the Father; and all-embracing Love to the

Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Word; but the works of creation and of Providence have as their Author the unique nature of God, in whom the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity are indissolubly united.

Do not forget your baptismal faith. Believe in God. Believe in love, which is, in substance, God. *Deus charitas est.*[1]

Believe in the sayings of the Word: He came to reveal the love of God to the world, and in order to convince us and bring us to Him, He deigned to carry the evidences of His love before our eyes and hearts, far beyond that which the most rigorous divine justice could have demanded for the redemption of mankind. For whereas a prayer, a sigh, a tear would have sufficed for the salvation of humanity, our Saviour strove to conquer our souls by every means that could touch and move us, that could make us love Him, and pass, by Him, to the love of His Father.

Need I remind you, Brethren, of the Babe of Bethlehem, for whom His parents did not even demand the humblest place in an inn; of the Flight through the desert into Egypt, under the threat of murderous persecution; of a childhood and youth spent under a humble roof, in the obscurity of a workshop; of the fatigues of a ministry exposed to the opposition of the Scribes and

[1] *I John* iv. 8.

Pharisees, the ingratitude of the masses, the obstinate prejudices of the Disciples and Apostles; finally, of that last week, into which, rushing one upon the other like the waters of a torrent, were crowded the Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, the treachery of Judas on the very evening of the institution of that Sacrament we so rightly call the Sacrament of Love, and the institution of the priesthood, the choice between Jesus and Barabbas, the frenzy of the crowd, blaspheming Him whom but yesterday they had acclaimed with triumphant Hosannas, the scenes in the Prætorium and in the court of Herod: our gentle Lord's back and shoulders scourged with rods, His head lacerated by the crown of thorns, His face defiled by spittle and swollen by buffeting; the whole adorable person of the Man-God outraged and mocked, rendered what the prophetic psalm describes as "a reproach of men, and the outcast of the people," *abjectio plebis*,[1] or as Tertullian has it, "one who is of no more account," *nullificamen plebis;* then the ascent to Calvary, the swooning of the Victim under the weight of the cross; the desertion by all the Apostles save St. John; the Crucifixion; the Messias exposed to public derision between two thieves, in sight of His Mother, a martyr with Him; all suffering, physical and moral, heaped upon a single head, even to the sense of total abandonment

[1] *Psalm* xxii. 6.

which drew from the dying lips that sigh of supreme distress: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? *Deus meus, Deus meus, ut quid dereliquisti me!*" [1] My Brethren, you who pass so often before the crucifix, pause for a moment, "and see if there be any sorrow like to this sorrow. *Vos omnes qui transitis per viam, attendite et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus.*" [2]

"God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but have life everlasting. *Sic enim Deus dilexit mundum, ut Filium suum unigenitum daret: ut omnis, qui credit in eum, non pereat, sed habeat vitam aeternam.*" [3]

Christians, do you not hear resounding in your souls the challenge of Jehovah to His chosen people, of the vine-dresser to his vineyard: "Inhabitants of Jerusalem and ye men of Juda," He says by the mouth of the Prophet Isaias, "judge between me and my vineyard. What is there that I ought to do more to my vineyard that I have not done to it? *Quid est quod debui ultra facere vineae meae, et non feci ei?*" [4] And do we not understand how the Apostle Paul, about to die for the love of his Saviour, ventured to cry: "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ let

[1] *Mark* xv. 34.
[2] *Lamentations* i. 12.
[3] *John* iii. 16.
[4] *Isaias* v. 3.

him be anathema. *Si quis non amat Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, sit anathema.*" [1]

III. *CONCLUSIONS*

First Conclusion: *Believe in the divine love.*

My Brethren, you cannot doubt the love of God for you; you cannot doubt that all He does is well, that it is the work at once of His Power, His Wisdom, His Love, the work of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

You cannot at the present moment understand the why and wherefore of all the events which His Providence ordains or permits; it is not required of you to understand them. Is it surprising, I ask you, that the finite should fail to understand the infinite; that the child, lisping the first letters of the alphabet, should not grasp the meaning of the great Book of History; that the spectator of a sunrise and a sunset should not take in the meaning of eternity?

If indeed you could understand, you would not need to believe; and it is God's will that you should believe, that your faith should be meritorious for you, and glorious for Him. The holy man Job, whom the Scriptures offer as a pattern to suffering souls, was absolutely right in refusing to listen to his wife and his friends, who urged him to rebel, on the pretext that the trials which

[1] *I Corinthians* xvi. 22.

had overwhelmed a faithful servant of God were senseless chastisements. "If we have received good things at the hand of God," replied the martyr, "why should we not receive evil? *Si bona suscepimus de manu Dei, mala quare non suscipiamus?*"[1]

In other words, it is not for us to judge whether a thing is good or evil; the main point is not to know whether it pleases or displeases us. Our point of view is too restricted, our horizon too limited, our faculty of judgment too uncertain, to enable us to pronounce wisely upon the bearing and value of providential events.

There is a much safer course, the only truly safe one, that is, to keep our own place, in the humility proper to our incompetence and our inferiority, and to leave to God sovereign autonomy, understanding, and love. The holy king David, whose life was so full of trials, was often troubled at the sight of the insolent prosperity of his persecutors and enemies; he poured out his doubts, his anguish, and his grief in his Psalms; but Faith triumphed in him, and finally led him to these outbursts of loving confidence: "What have I in heaven? And besides Thee what do I desire upon earth? For Thee my flesh and my heart hath fainted away. Thou art the God of my heart and the God that is my portion for ever. For behold! they that go far from Thee

[1] *Job* ii. 10.

shall perish . . . but it is good for me to adhere to my God; to put my hope in the Lord God." [1]

If you are tempted to be sceptical, my Brethren, take your Psalter; read and meditate upon a few Psalms; your faith will revive, and almost involuntarily, you will begin to pray.

SECOND CONCLUSION: *Act of adoration, submission, and love.*

Pater Noster, Our Father: My God, the first thought I will contemplate when, in sorrow as in joy, I lift up my soul to Thee, is that Thou art my Father, that I am Thy Child, that between Thee and me, thanks to Thine ineffable condescension, there are family relations. It is as a child with his father that I wish to live with Thee. I do not doubt Thee, any more than I doubt my own father and mother; I have less confidence in my own father and mother than in Thee, because my father and mother are often unable to give me the good things they would bestow upon me, whereas, O my Father in Heaven, nothing can resist Thy sovereign will.

Our Father who art in Heaven: It is not upon earth, in the restricted space of a shelter made by the hand of man, that the family life of God's

[1] *Quid enim mihi est in coelo? Et a te quid volui super terram? Defecit caro mea et cor meum: Deus cordis mei, et pars mea Deus in aeternum. Quia ecce qui elongant se a te, peribunt. . . . Mihi autem adhaerere Deo bonum est; ponere in Domino Deo spem meam.* Psalm lxxii. 25–28.

children develops. Heaven is the region above matter, above the reason of the feeble human creature; it is the spirit, of which baptismal grace has made a temple; it is the bosom of the divine Trinity, where the Christian soul, transformed by Faith, Hope and Charity, and by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, breathes in God, believes in God, and expands in God, until it attains the stature allotted to it by the design of eternal predestination.

Hallowed be Thy Name: My God, Thou art essential sanctity, and as such, inaccessible to a miserable and sinful creature. Thou art infinitely above us. Thy Majesty, enthroned in the holy temple of its glory, transcends our vain efforts to praise and glorify it. *Benedictus es in templo sanctae gloriae tuae, et superlaudabilis et supergloriosus in saecula.* But O, unfathomable depth of divine Love, Mystery which comprises all mysteries, Thou wast pleased to bring us forth from the void, to bend down towards us, to enfold us with Thy love, to offer us a share in Thy life and Thy felicity. There is, however, a condition attached to this deification of our souls: we must believe that Thou lovest us, we must have faith in Christ, the supreme revelation of divine Love; we must believe in Thy Love, O Jesus, as the friend believes in his friend, the child in his mother, the wife in her husband. This faith is the highest glorification of the Holy

Name of God: *Sanctificetur nomen tuum. Hallowed be Thy Name.*

Thy Kingdom come: My soul is a temple for Thee, my Saviour, may it also be a kingdom for Thee! I am and will be Thy subject. Reign supremely over me. If I have sometimes turned away from Thee, if I have even rebelled against Thee, it was because I did not know Thee. Happily for me, my God, Thou art not estranged either by the cowardice or by the revolts of my nature. Thou askest only my faith, and a loyal will under the guidance of faith and the inspiration of Thy love. Lord, I believe, I would believe, help Thou mine unbelief.[1] Overcome my resistance. I know that Thou subduest me only in order to love me. To submit myself to Thee is to make myself beloved by Thee; it is to leave Thee free to realize my happiness, even in spite of myself. Dispose of me, Lord, break down in me, either with or against my own will, all obstacles to the invasion and the triumph of Thy Love.

Thy Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven: My will belongs to Thee, I sacrifice it to Thee. What Thou willest is good, always good; what I will may not be so. My will must bow to Thine. Subdue it, purify it, transform it. The saints and angels in Heaven see and acclaim Thine infinite wisdom. I do not see it, but I believe in it. I bless Thy will, past and present. I await,

[1] *Mark* ix. 24.

in loving confidence, Thy future will. There is no event which does not bring us a message of love, an offer of union, a pledge of beatitude from Thee. All the designs of Providence are merciful and faithful, as the Psalmist tells us, but to experience this, we must enter into the divine covenant and desire to receive its testimonies. *Universae viae Domini, misericordia et veritas requirentibus testamentum ejus et testimonia ejus.*[1]

May the name of the Lord be blessed now and ever! *Sit Nomen Domini benedictum ex hoc nunc et usque in saeculum!*

(*Signed*) D. J. Card. Mercier
Archbishop of Malines

[1] *Psalm* xxiv. 10.

VIII

CHRISTIAN VENGEANCE

VIII

CHRISTIAN VENGEANCE

Address delivered to the Deans, during their Annual Reunion at the Archiepiscopal Residence, on January 29, 1917. (Feast of St. Francis de Sales.)

REVEREND AND DEAR DEANS:

IT has occurred to me that, during the troublous epoch through which we are passing, no day was more propitious for an exchange of views and sentiments with my closest fellow-workers than the feast of the great bishop, St. Francis de Sales, whose character and teachings trace so luminous a path of Christian spirituality and pastoral action.

Monsignor de Ségur recalls the fact that, in the Middle Ages, every Doctor of the Church had his surname: St. Thomas Aquinas was known as Doctor *Angelicus;* St. Bonaventure as Doctor *Seraphicus;* Duns Scotus as Doctor *Subtilis.* And, he adds, Pius IX is said to have declared that, if the great Bishop of Geneva should one day be ranked by the Church among her Doctors, we should have to style him Doctor *Infallibilis* (the infallible Doctor), so sure, so evangelic, so

luminous and so firmly grounded is his spiritual doctrine.[1]

It is indeed true that all the saints whom the Church raises to her altars, have practiced virtue to an heroic degree, and that she offers them all for our imitation. Each has, nevertheless, his individual features; in each we behold, as it were in greater relief than in the others, one of the traits of the Sacred Face of Our Saviour, inimitable as these traits are in their supreme ideality. The practice of meditating on the saints thus prepares our eyes for the contemplation of the human-divine countenance of Christ.

St. Francis lived, labored, and spent himself in an age when the pagan renaissance and nascent Protestantism agitated mankind (1567–1622). His labors, his worries, and his combats remind us of St. Paul, St. Athanasius, or St. Augustine. Consequently, no better model could be chosen for our contemplation. Whether we regard his moral character or even his physical appearance — if we may judge from the portraits we possess of him — the contemplation of the Saint will bring us enlightenment and encouragement.

Examine more closely, my dear Colleagues, this noble countenance. An old fellow-worker and university friend of mine, the late and so

[1] Chaumont, "Directions spirituelles de S. François de Sales: La Souffrance. Préface de Mgr. de Ségur."

beloved Monsignor Cartuyvels, had a favorite saying that at forty a man is responsible for his countenance. St. Francis de Sales fashioned his by almost fifty years of ceaseless labor. Of an ardent, and even choleric temperament, he became a model of *meekness*, and numbers were accustomed to speak of him as "meek St. Francis de Sales." Let none, however, fall into the error of believing that his meekness was a spontaneous grace springing from a soft and timid nature; it represented the victory of a will accustomed to govern the emotions and to rely on a *fortitude*, or firmness of soul, which nothing could dishearten and nothing overcome.

Our vanity loves to console itself with the idea that the saints were formed in a different mould from that in which we ourselves were cast. Nothing could be more deceptive or more enervating than this prejudice. "No, no," says St. Ambrose, "let us convince ourselves of this: the saints were not of a nature superior to ours; they were more generous than we, and therein lies the explanation; they were not free from evil passions, but they applied themselves to the task of conquering them." [1]

The *fortitude*, or strength of soul, displayed by the saintly Bishop of Geneva sprang from his *charity*. He cultivated an overflowing affection for all his brethren, and especially for those

[1] St. Ambrose, "De Joseph Patriarcha," cap. 1, in P. L. XIV, 643.

towards whom he felt naturally least attracted. "He made himself all things to all men so as to save souls," says the Collect in the Mass and the liturgical office of his feast day: "O God, who didst will that blessed Francis should become all things to all men for the salvation of souls . . ., graciously grant that through the sweetness of Thy charity we may attain everlasting bliss."

And, in this chosen soul, these three different virtues were fused in so sweet a harmony — they were poised in such perfect equilibrium — that they convey an impression of repose, of order, and of *serenity* to all who consider the countenance of the saint.

Let us apply to ourselves, my very dear Colleagues, the advice of this holy Bishop. "Read," he says,[1] "the stories and the lives of the saints, in which, as in a mirror, you will behold the portrait of the Christian life, and accommodate their actions to your profit according to your vocation."

Let us consider, one after another, each of these four virtues which are characteristic of the saint: *meekness*, *fortitude*, *charity* and *serenity*. Let us study them with a view to adapting them to our own mode of life, and determine to draw inspiration from them in the actual practice of our ministry.

[1] "Introduction to a Devout Life," part II, chap. XVII.

MEEKNESS

A large number of priests, both pastors and assistants, are engaged on the *Comités de Ravitaillement* (committees for food distribution). This work of corporal mercy, which should win us the gratitude of all whom we aid, leaves in reality many persons discontented, and many ungrateful. Be patient, dear friends. Distrust your natural inclinations. Do not yield to the temptation to say: "If they treat me in this fashion, I am going away." Do not throw the helve after the hatchet. What do you expect? We must take poor humanity just as it is. Was it not our old minister, Beernaert, who defined gratitude as "the remembrance of favors we hope to obtain." Disinterested affection is not common. Do not we all prove this in our relations with God? Do we love Him for His own sake, as a rule, or for the sake of ourselves?

Let the ingratitude of our neighbors teach us to supernaturalize our intentions. When our Divine Saviour urges us to cultivate neighborly charity, He calls it a new commandment: "A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another." Not indeed that the love of one's neighbor was not obligatory before the coming of the Messias, but it lacked that double character of universality and perfection which

Christian faith and charity alone could inspire and sustain.

After the example of Christ, we must love everybody without exception. "For if you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even the publicans this?" [1] We must imitate our Heavenly Father, who sends His warm sun and beneficent rain to the evil as well as the good. In every unfortunate whom you assist you must no longer see a man with his defects and failings, but Christ, of whom this unfortunate is a suffering member. For "as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren," says Our Saviour, "you did it to Me." [2]

The mercy which is exercised in this spirit does not stop short of the extremest self-sacrifice, after the example of Christ who laid down His life for those whom He loved. "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." [3] Charity thus understood is new in history, for it dates from Christ and His Church. Make it your inspiration, my dear friends, and you will be humble of heart and meek of soul. You will not be depressed by disappointments; you will not be conceited or domineering; you will not be prone to anger, but will know how to suffer all, accept all, expect all, support all.

[1] *Matthew* v. 46.
[2] *Matthew* xxv. 40.
[3] *John* xv. 13.

"Charity is patient, is kind; charity dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up; is not ambitious, is not provoked to anger; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." [1]

FORTITUDE

We must not, however, confound meekness with desertion of duty, nor moderation with the surrender of principles. Meekness [2] derives its sustenance from patience, a virtue which is a component part of fortitude (*fortitudo*), or strength of soul.

In the *Comités de Ravitaillement* and elsewhere, one may see members venting their ill-temper on their subordinates, or bearing themselves in an arrogant manner. One may also see members — and often the self-same members — retire in a temper when confronted with opposition, lapse into an angry silence, and finally resign their task and relinquish the field to their adversaries. These members are lacking in self-control and fortitude.

[1] *I Corinthians* xiii. 4–7.

[2] *Meekness* is a virtue. It is a beatitude (*Matthew* v. 4), that is to say, an act of virtue. It is a fruit of the exercise of virtue (*Galatians* v. 22). Considered as a virtue, it is related — with its associates, humility and modesty — to the cardinal virtue of temperance. *Patience* is an auxiliary of meekness. It teaches man to preserve equanimity amidst the trials of life. It is included in the cardinal virtue called fortitude, or strength of soul.

In the face of a common enemy, good patriots should certainly close up their ranks more tightly than ever around their King and the public authorities. After the war there will inevitably be a truce, the duration of which, in my opinion, no one can now foresee, and during which the politicians of all parties must combine their talents and their influence for the resurrection of our ruins and the restoration of public order. The anticipation of this truce, which the Belgian Government has already inaugurated in Havre by admitting into its bosom the leaders of the Liberal and Socialist parties, has inspired the directors of the *Comité National de Secours et de Ravitaillement* with a spirit of benevolent neutrality to which we gladly pay tribute. We are obeying a sentiment of loyalty when we affirm that the Central National Committee has given us in many instances what is better than verbal declarations — namely, effective proofs of its care for neutrality. But, just as before the war politicians used to brave authority and at times vied with one another in evading the laws, certain individuals, whom a member of the General Committee described as "persons of inferior mentality," are even to-day incapable of ridding themselves of sectarianism, and show greater concern for their own future influence with the electorate than for national union. You must not capitulate to these individuals. Whether it is a question of

education, charitable enterprises or religion, be firm and persevering in the defence of the souls of the children, the interests of the poor, and the rights of Catholic families. True fortitude, *fortitudo christiana*, declares itself in action. Calmly and unflinchingly insist that your rights prevail; go and plead your cause, if necessary, before the Central Committee. And, when you have exhausted in vain all the means of resistance that are at your disposal, come to us, and we shall leave nothing undone to secure recognition for the justice of our common cause. The interests which you defend are not your own, but those of God and of His Church. You have, therefore, no right to abandon their defence. Hear what Jeanne de Chantal says of the meek St. Francis, whom she knew so intimately: "Our very dear father was the bravest, most generous and powerful soul that one could have seen in discharging the tasks and labors, and in pursuing the enterprises with which God inspired him. He never became disheartened, and used to say that, when Our Saviour commits a task to us, we must not abandon it, but have the courage to overcome all difficulties." [1]

My dear Colleagues, after the example of the great Bishop under whose patronage we are assembled, be *meek* and humble of heart. But do not be weak or timid; be *strong*.

[1] Letter of St. Jane Frances de Chantal on St. Francis de Sales.

One of the main reasons for the relative sterility of numerous lives is because the faithful and priests do not arouse themselves to a sufficiently clear recognition of the resources which the Christian soul and sacerdotal zeal have at their disposal for the attainment of good. Do not confound pride and bravery, or pusillanimity and humility. St. Paul says: "For not he who commendeth himself, is approved;" [1] but he has said elsewhere: "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me." [2] God has given you the grace to live in the most tragic epoch of our history. Forge yourselves virile souls. Courage, like all the virtues, is acquired and developed by exercise. You have heavy responsibilities, but let them not make you timorous. "If God puts ten pounds on a man," says an English writer, "He gives him strength to bear twenty." The essential thing is that you proceed conscious of your dependence on God. His arm will raise you to the level of each task. "Commit thy way to the Lord," says the Psalmist,[3] "and trust in Him, and He will do it."

CHARITY

Meekness and humility, patience and courage, have their roots in charity. After the example of St. Francis de Sales, who emulates St. Paul,

[1] *II Corinthians* x. 18.
[2] *Philippians* iv. 13.
[3] *Psalm* xxxvi. 5.

center all your energies in charity: make yourselves all things to all men. "O God, who didst will that St. Francis, Thy Confessor and Pontiff, should become all things to all men for the salvation of souls, graciously grant that, infused with the sweetness of Thy charity, we may attain everlasting bliss."

To-day the general law of charity should regulate especially our relations with those who have become our enemies, our relations with certain fellow-citizens who allow their selfish interests to compromise national union, and our relations towards our country.

I. Charity towards our Enemies

Catholics in other countries, who have not found in their hearts one word of reprobation for the German armies when they massacred the innocent inhabitants of Dinant, Virton, Andenne, Tamines, Aerschot, and Louvain, shot our priests, and set fire to our open towns and defenseless villages; who have propagated, or allowed to be propagated, the calumny which sought to absolve the criminals by transforming the victims into guilty parties; who, with folded arms, unmoved looks and closed lips, have now looked on for almost three years at the torture of a formerly friendly people, who had never wished Germany anything but good — these same Catholics discover to-day pathetic accents to compose hymns

to Christian brotherhood, to the burial of the past and to peace.

Confused notions are afloat as to our relations in justice and charity towards the enemy of the Belgian fatherland, and the occasion is propitious for recalling some points in the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas, the master *par excellence* of Christian philosophy and theology.

There are two deep propensities in the heart of man — one towards joy and the other towards anger. The first has for its object the possession of a good, and joy is the fruit of this possession. The second propensity has for its object the removal of an evil, or the revolt against this evil when it has settled on us.

These two propensities are met with in the animal kingdom and in man. In the case of animals, they occur in the state of need and of passion; in the case of man, they are found both in the state of need and passion and in the state of rational inclination.

Our propensity towards pleasure, whether sensible or supra-sensible, is outside the question which now concerns us. Our propensity towards anger and vengeance — the animal passion or the rational inclination of the will — alone interests us here.

St. Thomas defines anger as an "appetite for vengeance" (*ira est appetitus vindictæ*). This appetite may have its seat in the sensible part of

our nature, or in the super-sensitive will. How are we to judge it from the moral standpoint?

It may be either good or bad, says St. Thomas; it may occasion an act of virtue or a sin, according as the object of the vengeful will is just and proper or otherwise. "To have the *will* to avenge evil, while respecting the order of justice, is to perform an act of virtue. To will thus to redress a moral evil, within the limits of right, is to feel anger at evil, to perform a work of zeal, to act well."

But to desire vengeance inordinately, "whether we transcend the limits of justice or seek first the extermination of the guilty party and the repression of evil only as an afterthought, is to do evil. In this latter case, the suffering of our neighbor becomes the aim of our vengeance."

And how must we judge the participation of *passion* in this vengeful anger? Does the moral law require that the will to avenge an evil be impassive? St. Thomas declares the contrary. Passion is undoubtedly dangerous at the moment when a man is to pass judgment on the morality of a contemplated act, as it may then indeed disturb the calmness of his judgment. But from the moment when the justice of the repressive act is apparent and the morality of the repression has been decided, the passion accompanying the anger becomes the auxiliary of the will, and lends more vigor and promptness to the accomplishment of justice. When thus confined to their

proper role, passions are, says St. Thomas, useful for virtue (*utiles virtuti*).[1]

The application of these principles to the situation which confronts us is apparent. The injustice of the violation of our territory is flagrant, and is even admitted by its authors. The scorn

[1] The preceding paragraphs are taken, almost verbatim, from different passages of the superb opusculum of St. Thomas, entitled "De Malo." The following are the principal texts on which our argument is based: "*In ira sicut in qualibet alia passione, duo possumus considerare: unum quod est quasi formale, aliud quod est quasi materiale. Formale quidem in ira est id quod est ex parte animae appetitivae, quod scilicet ira sit appetitus vindictae; materiale autem id quod pertinet ad commotionem corporalem. . . . Ita ergo, si consideretur ira secundum id quod est formale in ea, sic potest esse et in appetitu sensitivo et in appetitu intellectivo qui est voluntas, secundum quam aliquis potest velle sumere vindictam; et secundum hoc manifestum est quod ira potest esse et bona et mala.*

"*Manifestum est enim quod quando aliquis quaerit vindictam secundum debitum justitiae ordinem, hoc est virtutis, puta, cum vindictam quaerit ad correctionem peccati, servato ordine juris; et hoc est irasci contra peccatum.*

Cum autem aliquis inordinate appetit vindictam, est peccatum: vel quia quaerit vindictam praeter ordinem juris, vel quia quaerit vindictam magis intendens exterminationem peccantis quam abolitionem peccati; et hoc est irasci in fratrem.

Ira et aliae passiones dupliciter se possunt habere ad judicium rationis: uno modo, antededenter; et sic necesse est ut semper ira et omnis hujus modi passio judicium rationis impediat, quia anima maxime judicare potest veritatem in tranquillitate quadam mentis; alio modo, potest se habere ira ad judicium rationis, ut consequenter; quia scilicet postquam ratio dijudicavit et ordinavit modum vindictae, tunc passio insurgit ad exequendum; et sic ira et aliae hujusmodi passiones non impediunt judicium rationis quia jam præcessit; sed magis adjuvant ad promptius exquendum, et in hoc sunt utiles virtuti; unde Gregorius dicit: Tunc ira robustius contra vitia erigitur, cum subdita rationi famulatur." — "De Malo," q. XII. art I.

"*Si aliquis appetat quod, secundum ordinem rationis, fiat vindicta, est laudabilis irae appetitus, et vocatur ira per zelum.*" "Summ. Theol." 2a 2ae, q. 158. art. 2.

shown for our rights from the fatal days of the first invasion of our country to the present hour is incontestable. The repression of these iniquities is thus a manifest right, and is moreover a duty for those who have the means of repressing them. To wish that this duty be exercised, that order be reëstablished, that the authors of the disorder be chastised and reduced to a condition of powerlessness to injure us further; to wish that inoffensive people shall have the opportunity of living in peace, that the final decision shall accord with right and the vindication of the God of justice — to desire this with all the energy of our will and with all the passionate ardor of which our human nature is capable, is simply to correspond with the plea of justice, to perform an act of virtue.

But, some people object, this is the same as hatred, and charity excludes hatred.

Assuredly charity excludes hatred. Hatred is the contrary of charity. They are as mutually exclusive as fire and water, and it is impossible that they co-exist in the same person.

But what is hatred? It is to wish someone evil for evil's sake; to wish that our neighbor should suffer for no other reason than that he may suffer; to make his suffering our object on which our wills can dwell with pleasure. Such a disposition of souls would be grievously culpable.

On the other hand, to wish a physical evil to someone who has committed an injustice and obstinately perseveres in his unjust course, and to wish this physical evil, not as an end in itself, but as a means of attaining an ulterior moral end; to wish that the guilty should suffer so that, under the pressure of suffering, there shall come about in his soul the conversion which he refuses to effect voluntarily — this is not to hate him, but on the contrary to love him rationally.[1]

"As I live, saith the Lord, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live." [2] We follow the teaching of God; we do not desire our enemies to be excluded from Paradise, but we wish that they shall again become worthy of entering into it.

"He who loves well, chastises well," says the proverb. The love for avenging justice may be carried to excess and degenerate into cruelty, but it may also err by defect, by inflicting on

[1] "*Vindicatio fit per aliquod poenale malum inflictum peccanti. Si vindicantis intentio feratur principaliter in malum illius de quo vindictam sumit, ut ibi quiescat, est omnino illicita; quia delectari in malo alterius pertinet ad odium, quod charitati repugnat. Si vero intentio vindicantis feratur principaliter in aliquod bonum, ad quod pervenitur per poenam peccantis, puta ad emendationem peccantis, vel saltem ad cohibitionem ejus et quietum aliorum, et ad justitiae conservationem, et Dei honorem, potest esse vindicatio licita, aliis debitis circumstantiis servatis.*" "Summ. Theol." 2a 2ae q. 108, art. 1.

[2] "*Vivo ego, dicit Dominus Deus, nolo mortem impii; sed ut convertatur impius a via sua, et vivat. Convertimini, convertimini a viis vestris pessimis.*" *Ezechiel* xxxiii. 11.

the guilty less punishment than the occasion merits.[1]

Virtue is always the exact mean between extremes. The will to avenge an evil is properly a virtue. St. Thomas considers it as a special virtue which completes in each of us our natural repulsion for everything hurtful to us, makes us repel an injury which menaces us, and incites us to take vengeance for it after we have received it. What would you say of a man who, under the pretext of kindness, would endeavor to close all prisons and suppress the penal code?

The collective crime of a nation which violates the rights of another nation is incomparably more grave than the crime of an individual whom society sends to the guillotine or the scaffold. We well understand that those who doubt the justice of their cause seek to see in war only subjects for pity or horror. But for us war is the means of making honor respected and right triumph, and of reëstablishing on a pinnacle truth and the worship of the God who is Truth. Herein lies the grandeur and nobility of war and the justification of all its sacrifices.

Let us therefore not confound hatred, a vice, with the spirit of just vengeance, a virtue. Hatred

[1] "*Vindicationi opponuntur duo vitia: unum quidem per excessum, scilicet peccatum crudelitatis, vel saevitiae, quae excedit mensuram in puniendo; aliud autem est vitium quod consistit in defectu, sicut cum aliquis est nimis remissus in puniendo.*" "Summ. Theol." 2a 2ae, q. 108, art. 2, ad. 3.

is inspired by an instinct of destruction. The virtue of vengeance is inspired by charity. Bravery paves the way for its advance, by banishing terror from the heart. Our King, our Government, and the Belgian people have shown their fortitude on August 2, 1914, at midnight, when they braved the insolence of the military colossus which now bestrides us.

Having banished terror, the upright soul looks straight to his duty. An injury has been done to truth, justice, and God, and he considers it done to himself. The peril of his brothers becomes his own. The flame of the twofold love of God and humanity is lighted within him, and he decides to sacrifice himself in their defense, preferring anything rather than a dishonorable desertion of his duty.

In all this we can see only charity and the zeal which is its flame. The Belgian people resolved on this grand act of charity; it has remained faithful to its choice; its tears, its strength, its fortune and its blood did not seem too great a price to pay for the triumph of right and to safeguard its independence.[1]

But perhaps someone will say: "You have invoked strict right, and we understand your posi-

[1] "*Fortitudo disponit ad vindictam removendo prohibens, scilicet timorem periculi imminentis. Zelus autem, secundum quod importat fervorem amoris, importat primam radicem vindicationis, prout aliquis vindicat injurias Dei vel proximorum, quas ex charitate reputat quasi suas.*" "Summ. Theol." 2, 2, q. 108, Art. 2, ad. 2.

tion. But there is another point of view — that of Christian perfection. Is it not more perfect to return good for evil? Should not the Christian know how to pardon?"

To return good for evil may be preferable in the case of individual wrongs, secretly inflicted. But, viewing the matter in a practical light, you have, my dear Colleagues, in the parishes of your deaneries hundreds of ravaged, pillaged, and burned hearths; the absent ones of your congregations, whether deported as military or civilian prisoners, are legion. Is it to avenge these personal wrongs that your people demand justice? In the name of my experience, and no less confident of yours, I venture to answer: "No."

It is the injury done to the nation which has evoked general indignation and demands reparation. The crimes against public order cannot remain unpunished. A prince who would exercise clemency systematically, would compromise public security. A people who would hold an amnesty with injustice, would be unworthy of liberty.

The Gospel, it is true, always inclines towards forgiveness. But the Church knows on what conditions she may dispense it. Let us imitate her example. She demands from the sinner the confession of his fault; repentance; the promise not to relapse again into his error; if he has done an injustice, the promise to make restitution in

accordance with the well-known declaration of St. Augustine: "*Non remittetur peccatum, nisi restituatur ablatum.* Let no sin be remitted unless that which was taken away be restored"; and finally the acceptance of a penance in satisfaction of the penalties due for the offences committed.

As soon as our enemies shall have fulfilled these conditions, the hour of mercy will have struck for them.

Certain sentimental souls grow uneasy at times when they remember the text: "But if one strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other." [1] If you wish to understand fully the meaning of this evangelical counsel, consider, says St. Augustine, the example of our Lord Himself. While our Divine Master was submitting to the interrogation of Caiaphas, an officer ventured to strike Him. Our meek Saviour did not answer: "Here is the other cheek." He offered this dilemma to the guilty man: "If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil; but if well, why strikest thou Me?" [2]

St. Paul the Apostle also, says St. Augustine, was scourged in public by order of Ananias, prince of the priests. Did the accused receive the blows in silence? "God shall strike thee, thou whited wall. For sittest thou to judge me

[1] *Matthew* v. 39.
[2] *John* xviii. 23.

according to the law, and contrary to the law commandest me to be struck." [1]

This retort was accompanied by words of biting irony.

Consequently the above-mentioned scriptural quotation should not be interpreted strictly according to the letter. It means that, whatever happens, we must remain masters of ourselves, and preserve our interior patience. As to our external conduct, that will depend on circumstances. "Benevolence, properly understood, often counsels us to use harshness towards our neighbor. We should know how to correct him in spite of himself and have regard for his real interest rather than for his preferences."

But has not the Lord said in Deuteronomy: "Revenge is Mine, and I will repay them." [2] And in his epistle to the Romans does not St. Paul give the same advice: "If it be possible, as much as is in you, have peace with all men. Revenge not yourselves, my dearly beloved; but give place unto wrath, for it is written: Revenge is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." [3]

Evidently these inspired texts do not mean that God reserves for His immediate action every exercise of repressive justice, seeing that in this same epistle to the Romans from which the

[1] *Acts* xxiii. 3–5.
[2] *Deuteronomy* xxxii. 35.
[3] *Romans* xii. 18–19.

above words are taken, the Apostle declares expressly that the representative of public power "beareth not the sword in vain. For he is God's minister: an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil." [1]

According to St. Thomas, the meaning of these texts of Scripture is as follows: External offenses fall under the repressive power of the public authorities, but in the case of hidden faults I reserve to myself the right of judging and punishing them. And you Christians do not form premature judgments: "Judge not before the time." [2]

Or perhaps, says the holy doctor, the texts may have this other meaning: "The crimes of men offend God. So it is to God that justice and reparation are due. It is to usurp a divine prerogative, to claim for one's self the intention of justice." [3]

One last question may be considered. Does it befit the clergy to take part in conflicts which are brought about by the war and occupation? Are not the bishop and his priests to devote them-

[1] *Romans* xiii. 4.

[2] *I Corinthians* iv. 5.

[3] "*Circa vindictam Deus aliquid sibi soli retinuit. Inferre enim vindictam in manifestis delictis, aliis commisit qui constituuntur in ordine alicujus potestatis. . . . De occultis vero sibi soli judicium et vindictam reservavit, secundum illud: 'Nolite ante tempus judicare.'*

"*Sibi etiam reservavit Deus ut propter seipsum vindicaretur: homo enim non debet vindicari propter seipsum, sed propter culpam commissam, quae est offensa Dei. Quando ergo aliquis quaerit vindictam propter seipsum, vel praeter ordinem judiciariae potestatis, usurpat sibi quod Dei est.*" — "De Malo," q. XII, art. 3, ad 5.

selves exclusively to the spiritual needs of the faithful?

The Church is not an invisible society composed of pure spirits. The faithful are exposed to perils of the body and of the soul, of time and eternity. The solicitude of their pastors should extend to all these interests. Listen again to St. Thomas: "The pastors of the Church may not content themselves with resisting the wolves which cause the spiritual death of their flock. They should also oppose the ravishers of the people, and tyrants who cause physical suffering to their flock. Not that the representatives of ecclesiastical authority should themselves handle material arms, but they should make use of spiritual weapons — that is to say, address salutary warnings to the guilty parties, pray fervently and excommunicate obstinate rebels." [1]

The ambiguities which we have endeavored to explain away in this discussion of charity towards our enemies have their origin in an inadequate conception of charity. In the eyes of numerous persons who are badly instructed in the Christian religion, the virtues are like so many threads running parallel to each other in the weaving

[1] "*Praelati debent resistere non solum lupis, qui spiritualiter interficiunt gregem, sed etiam raptoribus et tyrannis qui corporaliter vexant; non autem materialibus armis in propria persona utendo, sed spiritualibus, quae quidem sunt salubres admonitiones, devotae orationes, contra pertinaces excommunicationis sententia.*" "Summ. Theol." 2, 2, q. 40, art. 2, ad 1.

machine. These threads differ in quality perhaps. Charity may even be conceded a superior quality, but it none the less runs parallel to the other threads of the warp. One can understand how the mind thus accommodates itself to the idea of a charity without justice, and how a means should be then sought of reconciling them.

But the above analogy is not at all in accordance with reality. Charity is the woof which forms a single tissue out of all the threads of the Christian virtues. All virtues may be included in a single precept: "Love God and love your neighbor for the love of God." Fundamentally there is only one virtue — the love of God for His own sake and the love of one's neighbor for the love of God. The Christian should be temperate, strong, just, prudent, but through charity; he should believe in God and hope in Him, but through charity. He should practice charity through charity. Charity is the sole inspiring and directing force of all moral and religious life.

There is no Christian justice without charity. There is no charity without justice. And inasmuch as avenging justice is a part of the virtue of justice, there is no charity without avenging justice. To desire to close one's eyes to injustice under the pretext of an heroic charity; to grant impunity to the crimes of an enemy, because he is an enemy, is to misunderstand the sovereign

and necessary dominion of charity over the organization of the moral, individual, and social life of Christianized humanity. If we praise or ignore the faults of a naughty child, we are spoiling him, not loving him. We must not spoil either our enemies or our friends.

Charity is one, but the mode of its exercise varies according to the object to which charity is directed. When we love the soul of a just man, we desire his perseverance; when we love the soul of a sinner, we desire his conversion. Let us imitate our holy mother, the Church. On Good Friday she prays for her faithful children and also for heretics and schismatics, for the descendants of the chosen people, and for the pagan nations. But for the first she asks sanctity and progress; for the others she desires repentance and the opening of their eyes to the light of truth.

It may not be amiss to remark that, in the pulpit and in the spiritual direction of souls, too great neglect is shown of this law which governs the contexture of the Christian virtues in the tissue of life. This neglect leads to the formation of fragmentary souls who are acquainted only with partial aspects of good, and of devotional souls — the world often calls them bigots — who practice their charity towards God under the form of ritual exercises, but who do not make of this fundamental virtue the soul of their morality and their piety.

In the pursuit of good it is not sufficient to regulate duly the attraction of pleasure (*temperance*); to brave the obstacles which are opposed to the acquisition or possession of moral good (*strength of soul, courage, fortitude*); to practice good and resist evil in such a way as not to infringe on the rights of others (*justice*). The virtues must be exercised within reasonable limits, without excess or defect — with *prudence*.[1]

Prudence thus introduces a unity in the perfect practice of good. It disposes a man who does good to do it well: *bonum bene facere*. But the primordial law of prudence is to direct man to his true end — that is, to his supernatural or Christian end, for mankind has no other. Hence, the sovereign law of prudence is that it be inspired by charity. Charity, poured into the soul by the Holy Spirit in Baptism, first directs the will towards our true end — God — whom faith reveals to us and hope makes us regard as our Supreme Good. Then, it imposes on supernaturalized prudence the duty of subordinating to God all other goods outside Himself, as so many means of reaching our end. Thoughts, desires, resolutions, works, moral virtues, the theological virtues of faith and hope are thus placed in the service of charity, the unifying principle *par*

[1] All moral virtues, as is known, depend on the four "cardinal" or fundamental virtues which are here quoted.

excellence of the whole moral and religious life of man and humanity.[1]

From this elevated point of view, which alone can be considered complete and true (in the full meaning of this word), moral or religious "particularism" becomes incomprehensible in a Christian life. Opposition between patriotism and justice, between justice and charity, becomes devoid of meaning.

Under the form of "habits," the Christian virtues appear, increase or decrease, and disappear together. Have you sufficiently meditated on this unity in the organization of the Christian life, its extent, its harmony? Have you considered how splendidly this order reveals itself in the individual conscience and the social intercourse? Have you, in a word, sufficiently realized this beauty of charity?

Have you sufficiently insisted on the interpretation of the virtues by the love of God and held up the elevation and fertility of Christian morality to the admiration of the people? Whence

[1] S. Thomas, "Summ. Theol.," 1, 2, qu. 65, art. 2, "*Aliae virtutes morales non possunt esse sine prudentia; prudentia autem non potest esse sine virtutibus moralibus inquantum virtutes morales faciunt bene se habere ad quosdam fines, ex quibus procedit ratio prudentiae. Ad rectam autem rationem prudentiae, multo magis requiritur quod homo bene se habeat circa ultimum finem, quod fit, per caritatem, quam circa alios fines, quod fit per virtutes morales. Unde manifestum fit quod nec prudentia infusa potest esse sine caritate; nec aliae virtutes morales consequenter, quae sine prudentia esse non possunt.*" Cfr. *ibid.*, 4 et art. 5, de unione fidei et spei cum caritate.

comes it that so many souls lower their Christianity to the level of naturalism? Put that question to yourselves, directors of souls, and supply the answer.

II. Charity towards our Fellow-citizens

You are aware of the dissensions which have arisen between the country people and the town folks, and between merchants and customers in consequence of the increased cost of food and clothing. It is not easy to define the responsibility of the different classes in these matters. Justice and charity, however, are both concerned in these complex problems. As to the questions of justice involved, I gave you, the day of the meeting, a note containing some general suggestions which you can turn to profitable account, especially in the confessional and in your conversations with the parties interested. But we must not forget that one can sin otherwise than by committing an offense against commutative justice. Charity towards individuals and legal justice — that is to say, respect for the common good — are also binding on the conscience, and this obligation becomes grave according to the gravity of the matter.

In the pulpit and in the confessional, insist on the practice of charity, on how odious it is to see exorbitant profits made at the expense of those who are in poverty or want, and on the obliga-

tion of avoiding everything that provokes hatred, jealousies, and rancor.

III. Charity towards our Country

Article 43 of the regulation concerning the laws and customs of war on land added to the Hague Convention, October 18, 1907, stipulates: "The authority of legal power having actually passed into the hands of the occupying party, the latter will take all measures within his power to re-establish and assure, in so far as is possible, public order and life, *while respecting the laws in force in the country except in so far as he is absolutely prevented from doing so.*"

It is very interesting to note that the Plan for an International Convention presented by Russia at the Conference of Brussels in 1874 permitted the occupying party "to maintain the laws in force, to modify them or suppress them entirely according to the exigencies of the war and with a view to public interest." The Conference, however, rejected this suggestion, and adopted a more restrictive clause, which permitted the occupying party to modify or suspend the laws in force only "if it is necessary." The regulation added to the Hague Convention, July 29, 1899, and that added to the Hague Convention, October 18, 1907, are more rigorous still, as they forbid all modification except in so far as it is absolutely impossible to do otherwise. These successive

changes of wording show conclusively the mature and determined desire of the signatories to impose on the occupying party respect for the laws which are in force in occupied territory. The delegates from Germany were the first signatories of this Article 43 of the Regulation added to the Convention.

Now the occupying government aims at the overthrow of the general administration of our country. It seems to have taken as its motto: "Divide et impera." The creation of the so-called University of Ghent, the administrative separation which has existed so long in certain ministries but which a certain recent decree has just made general, the public or clandestine encouragement given to journals and conventions (whether of thoughtless Walloons or foolish Flemings) which foster antagonism between the two races traditionally united under the Belgian flag, represent so many attempts — happily futile — to disturb our national union.

Those who would favor such equivocal conduct would be traitors to their native land. Questions of internal politics concern only the Belgians, and can be decided only by the Belgian Chambers, the Belgian Government and the King of the Belgians.

Be watchful, my dear Deans. Make the faithful avoid deceitful writings and conventions. Watch for and put an end to the schemes of traitors

who would make common cause with the enemy. Restrain the extravagances of youth. The nation has defied violence; let her beware of seduction. Patriotic piety is a virtue. Your state of life constitutes you the guardians and preachers of virtue.

SERENITY

"What I first recognized in our blessed father," said St. Chantal, "was the gift of a very perfect faith. . . . I have always seen the saint aspire to and breathe only the desire to live according to the truths of faith and the maxims of the Gospel. He used to say that the true way to serve God was to follow Him and walk after Him on the fine point of the soul, without any support of consolation, of sentiment or light except that of simple and naked faith. That is why he loved interior weariness, tribulation and desolation." [1]

"If I wish only pure water," says St. Francis de Sales, "what matter if it be brought to me in a golden vase or in a glass? I should even love it better in the glass, because there is then no color but that of the water, and I see it thus much better. What does it matter if the will of God is presented to me in tribulation or in consolation, since in both I wish and seek nothing else than the Divine Will, which is shown forth all the more clearly when there is no other beauty in evidence

[1] Letter of St. Jane Frances de Chantal on St. Francis de Sales.

than that of the holy and eternal good pleasure of the Lord." [1]

The pious Elizabeth of the Holy Trinity, a Carmelite nun of Dijon, used to say that the Christian has nothing to do with secondary causes, but with God alone.

And does the Gospel not state: "If thy eye be single [if thy eye regard but one thing, is fixed by faith on God], thy whole body shall be lightsome." [2] That is, thou shalt be entirely bathed in light.

Turn your thoughts directly to your God. He is the sovereign Master of events, He and none other. "I am the Lord, and there is no other." [3] Love Him for He loves you. He is love's very substance. He has begotten you in His only Son in whom repose all His favors. He is a father to you. Be a son to Him. Love Him, and, while hoping that it will be granted to you to behold His living personality in glory, adore Him in the manifestations of His Divine Will. Embrace these manifestations, each and all, chanting the eternal hymn of filial acquiescence: "Our Father, who art in Heaven. . . . Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."

How far should our surrender to the divine love extend?

[1] "Treatise on the Love of God," lib. ix, cap. iv.
[2] *Matthew* vi. 22.
[3] *Isaias* xlv. 18.

The holy bishop will tell us. He brings before our eyes the little Infant Jesus and His Blessed Mother, and the dialogue which the saint holds with the Divine Child is a sublime lesson in spirituality.

Here is a preliminary insight into the idea of perfect renunciation: "We, little children of the Heavenly Father, can walk with Him in two ways. In the first place, we can walk with Him by following the way of our own will, conforming this will to His, always holding the hand of His divine intention with the hand of obedience, and following His intention whithersoever it leads us. . . . But we can also walk with our Saviour without having any will of our own, simply allowing ourselves to be borne along the way of His divine pleasure (as an infant is borne in the arms of its mother) in a species of admirable consent which may be called the union, or better still the unity, of our will with God's. Thus it is that we should endeavor to conduct ourselves towards the divine pleasure, in so far as the effects of this divine pleasure come solely from Providence, and have not their origin in ourselves.

"It is true that we can wish events to happen in accordance with the will of God, and this wish is very good. But we may well also accept all events sent by the divine pleasure with a very simple tranquillity of will, which, not wishing anything whatsoever itself, lends a complete

acquiescence in everything that God wishes done in us, to us and by us."

Some pages later the holy doctor declares it very difficult to define clearly the extreme indifference of the human will when it is thus submerged in the will of God. It is not an "acquiescence," for that is an action of the soul when it declares its consent. It is not an "acceptance," for to accept is the action of embracing what happens to us. It is not a "permission," for to permit signifies a certain sluggish act of the will, which, while unwilling to do something itself, is ready to allow its performance by an outside agency. "It appears to me therefore that the soul which is in this state of indifference, and which wishes nothing, but lets God will what He pleases, might be said to retain its will in a state of simple and general expectancy — a loving expectancy — so much the more so as to await is not to do or to act, but to be ready for any occurrence. And, if we examine it closely, the expectancy of the soul is really voluntary, and is yet not an action, but a simple disposition to receive whatever will happen. After the events have occurred, the expectancy is converted into consent or acquiescence, but before the occurrence the soul is really only in a simple expectancy, indifferent as to what it may please the divine pleasure to ordain."

These preliminary ideas stated, the pious dialogue of the saint with the Infant Jesus follows:

"If anyone had asked the sweet Infant Jesus, as He was borne along in the arms of His Mother, whither He was going, would He not rightly have answered: 'I am not going; My Mother is going for Me.'

"And if He had been asked: 'But are you not at least going with Your Mother,' would He not have rightly replied: 'No, I do not go at all, or if I do go where My Mother carries Me, I do not go with her nor by any steps of My own, but I go by the steps of My Mother, by her and in her.'

"And if He were questioned still further: 'But at least, O dear Divine Child, You will to allow Yourself to be carried by Your sweet Mother?' 'Not so, by any means,' He would have said, 'I will nothing of that, but, inasmuch as My dear Mother walks for Me, she also wills for Me; I leave her alike the care of going and of willing to go for Me wherever she pleases. And, as I walk only by her steps, I also will only through her will; and, as long as I am in her arms, I do not intend to will or not to will, leaving to My Mother every other care, provided I remain at her bosom, am nourished at her breast, and cling to her adorable neck where I can kiss her lovingly with My lips. . . . That is the reason why, just as her walking suffices for her and for Me, without My taking a single step, her will also suffices for her and for Me, without My forming a wish for

anything that is to come or to go. Consequently, I am indifferent whether she goes quickly or leisurely, or whether she goes in this direction or that, nor do I ever inquire whither she wishes to go, resting content that, whatever happens, I am always in her arms.'

"O divine Child of Mary, grant to my wretched soul this transport of devotion. And go then, O beloved and adorable Infant — or rather do not go, but remain — thus holily clasped to the bosom of your sweet Mother. Go always in her and through her, or with her, and never go without her in the days of Thy childhood. Blessed is the womb that bore Thee and the paps that gave Thee suck!"

After reminding us that our Saviour had the use of reason from the moment of His conception, and could thus hold the discourses which have just been attributed to Him, St. Francis turns to his disciple, Theotimus, and continues:

"We should be like that, Theotimus, rendering ourselves flexible and plastic to the divine pleasure, as if we were of wax — not amusing ourselves desiring and wishing for things, but letting them be wished and done by God just as it pleases Him, *referring to Him* (as the Apostle says) *all our solicitude inasmuch as He has care of us.* Notice that he says *all* our solicitude — that is to say, both our solicitude over the outcome of events and our solicitude in willing and not willing.

For He will take care of the success of our affairs, and will *will* for us whatever is best.

"Let it be our constant care to bless God for whatever He shall do, saying like Job: 'The Lord has given me much, the Lord has taken it away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.' No, Lord, I wish for nothing, but leave everything for You to will according to Your good pleasure; and, instead of willing any events, I will bless You because You have willed them. O Theotimus, how excellent is this occupation of our will, when, relinquishing all preference as to how the divine pleasure may manifest itself, it takes up the task of praising and thanking the divine pleasure for all its manifestations!" [1]

CONCLUSION

My dear Colleagues, let us draw inspiration from these noble teachings. Let us raise ourselves above our impressions, above our reasonings and conjectures, above the clouds which envelop our poor human conceptions, to that serene sphere where the soul, rid of its passions and of itself, finds itself untrammeled in the presence of the divine pleasure.

Every day has its own trials. The practice of moral virtues varies with circumstances. At the present moment, *meekness*, *fortitude*, and *serenity*, assembled in the warm atmosphere of *charity*,

[1] "Treatise on the Love of God," lib. ix, cap. xiv–xv.

are especially necessary for us. We have the divine mission of sustaining and encouraging our people. Whatever be the human motives for our confidence in the future — and you now feel, more than ever, that they are justified — let us seek for better. After the example of Moses — who, according to the Epistle to the Hebrews, had as lively a faith in God as if he had seen Him with his eyes "By faith . . . he endured as seeing Him that is invisible,"[1] let us in filial fashion deliver our whole souls to God. Let this faith inspire our judgments and temper our wills. Immovable ourselves, we shall sustain our brethren. The Belgian people has not flinched; with the grace of God, it will not flinch. Its serenity will continue unaltered to the end of this harsh and prolonged trial; it will console our absent ones, thank our benefactors, encourage our soldiers, bless our Allies, and make its obeisance before His Majesty, King Albert. Until the end, this serenity will be our expression of defiance to our oppressors, our daily act of patriotism, the homage of Belgium to the wisdom, the goodness, the justice, and the mercy of God.

[1] *Hebrews* xi. 27.

THE END

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